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TALES OF LIFE AND DEATH.

TALES OF LIFE AND DEATH.

BY THE

HON. GRANTLEY F. BERKELEY.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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THE LADY GRACE,

This Work is Dedicated,

WITH

THE HIGHEST SENTIMENTS OF ADMIRATION AND RESPECT,

BY

THE AUTHOR.

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INTRODUCTION.

MANY actors on the mundane stage, feign farewell addresses, and rant all sorts of random adieus to a kind and listening audience, warning the play-going world of their "last appearance on the boards," and taking a grateful leave of the hands which had so often applauded them. An author, however, cannot avail himself of these touchstones to a treasury. He has, in reality, no personal appearance to make, like the man with the puppets in "Punch;" it is his hand that induces all his characters to move, and there, on the paper wall, his ideal photography remains, a standard monument of success, or a myth with but stability enough to give a date to time.

As Eve has been said "not to fear the measles, because *she'd Adam*," so I do not fear but what I can glean from ancient and modern tales of "life and death," in England and Ireland, enough that is curious and deeply interesting to elicit, and repay the reader's

curiosity; and to enable me to do this, in the forthcoming volumes, I have sought for my pen a new scene for its labours, for it is not wise to tarry too long on an over-trodden ground.

In these days, then, of varied literature, there is a prevailing fashion of writing "sensation novels," in which are massed together imaginative griefs and horrors, in order to create an inflammatory action in the mind of the reader, leading, as I think, to an unwholesome result. If "sensation" *is* to be the *only interest* thought of, why not eschew all horrors, or, with but a slight touch of them, by way of contrast, arouse only pleasurable emotion; ending as the drama on the stage so often ends, in a round of hand-shaking, blissful marriages, and a jolly song; in which hero and heroine, husbands and wives, dramatic seducer, murderer and thief, all take consecutive parts in a general hodge-podge of harmonious impossibilities!—the bad characters, of course, singing the bass. In all the works that have come from my pen, it has been my endeavour to gain attention by detailing certain incidents, to which I have known equivalents in the realities of life, and to endeavour agreeably to lead up to real events that have passed and been forgotten, or that have happened in later years, without having met with general attention.

In the two volumes which I now offer to the public, I have opened, as I have previously said, for my research, among other things, a new ground, and dealt with real facts that have happened among the excitable inhabitants, and wild scenes in the realms of "ould Ireland." In the stories told, no doubt there is plenty of sensational action; but if there is, fiction has nothing to do with it, for in this case, as I have ever found it to be, fact is a thousand times more curiously wonderful than fiction. The intrinsic worth of truth, in this endeavour of mine, in some instances leads, as I may say, to the indication of the hand of Heaven itself; surely, then, if I succeed in my endeavour to interest and amuse, as well as prove the interposition of Providence in saving the innocent, or in revealing the guilty, after all human means in either had failed, I adopt a more useful style of literature than can be invented by the most fertile brain, and deal with subjects well worth the consideration of man.

In the annals of literature, from time immemorial, there have been shown circumstances that went very far to substantiate the belief that there existed—when, or in what way I do not pretend to say—a mysterious power of communicating to the living, a prognostication of approaching misfortune or death. And the same incomprehensible power, if not actually *in* death,

or in a departed soul, was in some gifted hand to warn the living that at a certain day or hour, their nearest relatives had died.

In my experience, this fore- or after-warning has not been confined to the human race, but I have seen a prognostication of his approaching death assigned to a dog. In an introduction, such as this, I cannot afford space for many such references; they may better appear in my next work on Sports and Natural History, Scent and Instinct; but as illustrations, by fact, help the strength of narration, I will give two instances of mysterious warning, that have occurred within my own household in the space of the last two years.

Towards the middle or end of last June twelvemonths, my head keeper, Harry Toovey—he is in my service still—and James Hirons, an under keeper, who has since left me for a head place, were watching in an orchard between the Pineaster woods and my house, the first broods of hand-rearing pheasants that were under coops.

It was a fine still, dry night, and the men were lying on the ground about from three to four hundred yards from my house, the window of my bed-room looking to the spot where they were. Between my house and the orchard, there is a belt of trees and laurels close to the

house, and then a large open field running the whole way from the trees to the orchard, and joining it.

In the middle of that still night *both these men, at the same time*, heard a voice, apparently at some distance, call out the head keeper's Christian name twice, a rather long pause between each cry, "Harry—— Harry," and then nothing more. They thought that I called for the Christian name was pronounced so very distinctly, as I always pronounced it, if I thought the keeper was somewhere about, and I required his presence. Both the men jumped to their feet, and together exclaimed, "That's the master," and both hurried up to the house, but not seeing me, came beneath my window. They stood there and listened; doors and windows, too, were all closed and fast, and after waiting some time, and hearing no more, they thought that I no longer required their presence, or that they must have been mistaken. They retired, therefore, to their vigil in the orchard, but looked at their watch to note the time of this call, in order to show me they were there, and to know if I had called because anything was wrong.

On asking the next morning for further information, they found that I had not called for Harry, and for the moment the thing was forgotten.

Two days after this occurrence, Harry Toovey

received a letter from his home in Oxfordshire, with the information that, *precisely at that hour of the night, when he heard his name called twice, his father had died.*

The incident, as regards the dog, related to my favourite retriever, house-dog, assistant, and guard, "Diver," in the commencement of the winter of 1868.

He was a wonderfully sagacious creature, and hated the generality of mankind, though he was always very civil to, and gentle with ladies, even on the first time he saw them. One morning, on going to the lawn at breakfast-time to feed the pheasants, according to my usual custom, Diver, whose house was on the lawn, did not come forth to inspect the proceeding at the full length of his chain. At first, this fact did not strike me, but when I had done feeding the pheasants, I called him, but he did not appear.

At once I was sure something was wrong, and on going to his house, found he had slipped his collar and was not there. As he had done so once before, it was strange that he had not come directly to me at the front door; and on inquiring, I found that since I had left my bed-room, he had come to the back door, but had then disappeared.

Having whistled for, and sought him everywhere in

vain, the head keeper, who was out in the high road at the entrance gate, heard from a man who was riding by, and who knew the dog, that he was lying down by the side of the road in the village, about a quarter of a mile off, and there Toovey found him.

The dog returned with the keeper, and when he saw me and a friend of mine with our guns, he was as rejoiced as usual, for he knew we were going to shoot.

We went out all that morning, and I observed that the dog was a little lame in the near shoulder, and slightly downcast in his look, which I thought arose perhaps from pain. However, he picked up his rabbits as usual; and we were chiefly rabbit shooting till the afternoon. A covey of red-legged partridges in a grass-field was then observed, and knowing them to be very wild, I posted my friend behind the bank at the top of the field, and, taking a circle, came in on the birds on the other side. Having crept up to the bank, which was about five feet high, with poor Diver close at my heel, on raising my head to see where the birds were, they had run a little lower down the field than I expected. On looking over the bank exactly opposite them, they rose immediately, at a very long distance. With the left barrel I wounded a bird, and then endeavoured to kill him by the very quick use of the right barrel. Diver at my heel waited not

for the word "to go," but paying me the usual compliment he always did, of thinking that whatever was shot at must be dead, he sprang from my heel in a line with the gun and beneath it, till he jumped at the top of the bank. Alas! his beautiful black head, just as the second barrel went off, rose with his spring at the bank immediately beneath and *in front* of the gun, and the bottom of the charge just caught the base of the skull, at the back of the head where it joins the vertebræ or spine. The impetus of the spring and the blow sent that beautiful dog clear over the bank so quickly and suddenly, in the midst of the hanging smoke, that though I felt a thrill of horror at the possibility of accident, and saw how close upon death it must have been, yet in an anxious hope I stared to see if the well-known black retriever sped across the field in search of the bird.

Nothing appeared on the other side the bank;—the dog was no longer at my heel, and I knew he went over into the next field. There was neither murmur nor motion on the other side; therefore it was evident what *must have happened;* and, without looking over the bank, my path was direct to my solitary home.

Poor "Diver" had been killed dead on the spot; he could have felt nothing. He died and left *me* all the pain and misery consequent on the fact that, though by

the merest accident, still a faithful and affectionate creature had lost his life by my hand—the hand he had so often fondled and caressed.

In the tales now about to be recounted, there are a few of which the scenes are in Ireland. Ireland is a new field for my pen: and from the nature of the peasantry and lands, there is indeed a wide, as well as a wild locality, from which to glean incidents of a strange and stirring nature, both in "Life and Death." So strong in their features, so improbable in their results, that fact needs no support from fiction; and as regards sensational truth, fact will be found to be richer in astonishing records than even fairy tales or Arabian Nights' Entertainment, or the strangest imagination of romance.

While recounting the actual occurrences of "Life and Death" in the sister kingdom, there is no better place than the Emerald Isle affords for illustrating either violent, gloomy, or bright deeds, with the vein of humour which so much predominates in the breasts and brains of the sons and daughters of Erin. In this place it is not for me to dwell too long on any point, or I should overstep the limits assigned to my purpose; I therefore conclude with a remembrance of the moment, arising from what happened to a handsome, graceful, and accomplished girl, whose acquaintance I am happy

in possessing, while travelling in Ireland with her mamma.

They had stopped at an hotel; her mamma went out, leaving the young lady in their sitting-room to write some letters. As soon as her mamma was gone, she rung the bell, and "Och, by the faith of me!" an Irish waiter, answered the summons.

"Bring me *materials* for writing," said the young lady.

"Och, be dad, miss!" said the *rale* Hibernian, advancing delightedly, and rather confidentially, to the back of her chair. "But, sure, should you like it *hot or could?*"

He had caught the word "materials," and having seen the young lady's mamma that moment leave the hotel, *he*, at least, had imbibed the notion that 'twas "the crathur" she wanted for "a brew," "ahint her mother's back," and hence his delight and confidential bearing.

Trusting, then, that this introduction will at once place me face to face with the reading public, who have now so often and so kindly patronised my endeavours, I embark these volumes on the world's wide ocean, and trust that they will ensure a further attention to

THE AUTHOR.

THE

FAIR DOE OF FERNDITCH.

A Tale of Cranbourne Chase.

THE FAIR DOE OF FERNDITCH.

In all the counties of merry England there is not one of greater celebrity for its sporting attributes, than the County of Dorset. Its Vale of the Stour, its rivers and its trout-streams, its moors and heaths, its uplands and lowlands, are alike famous for their productions in foxes, hounds, fish, and game, deer, horses, sheep, and fowl; and as to that loveliness that outshines every other grace—the beauty of Woman!—

> On such sweet merits men *cannot* be dumb,
> They *leave* us wretched, but to bless—they come!

Well, then, still true to the limitless realms of nature, still in love with forest, field, and river; still freshened up by her soft breath of Spring, or braced by her breeze leaping from her billow-bounded beach to her crested hills, the scene of my story, for the present, is laid in Dorsetshire and Wiltshire, at not very far from the

time-honoured Wimborne Minster, which then as now, we hope, gave access to the gates of Heaven.

Cranbourne Chase, at the time I speak of, was in its glory; honoured by all the nobility and gentry around, and famed for the then most fashionable sport of "Buck Hunting,"* as well as bowls. The old chase or forest laws were then in existence. Keepers of the several walks were appointed, under a ranger, not over all, but over all in each walk, under one proprietor, or ranger, who lived in one of the lodges, and was generally one of the families of the neighbouring gentry; as witness the letter from "Thomas Chafin, Esq., to Lord Shaftesbury," published in the "Anecdotes and History of the Chase," on the former being "put out of his walk," as the historian, "William Chafin," describes it, in or about the year 1665. It seems that "Burches Stoole Walk," was the property of Lord Shaftesbury, who had "immense woods" within the walk, to which the deer were said to have done much mischief; but whether "Mr. Chafin," was removed from his trust because the deer were too

* To a bowling-green at Hanley, in the eastern part of Dorchester, resorted many gentlemen whose names are familiar to us now. The first Lord Shaftesbury, Mr. Hastings, of Woodland, to whom this tale principally refers; Sir Gerrard Nappier, Sir William Uvedall, Sir George Moreton, Messrs. Rogers, Cavent of Woodgates, Okeden, Butler, Hooper of Boryds, Ryves of Raynston, Holles, second son of Lord Clare, who married, in 1627, the only child and heiress of Sir Francis Ashley, a relation of the first Lord Shaftesbury; Chafin of Chettle, Hussey, Ernley, and Avney.

many or too few, does not, to my imagination, so clearly appear. By a most amusing little volume, lent me by my excellent friend, "the Rev. H. Good," of Winborne, one of whose family, the picture of whom I here present to my readers, seems to have taken an active part, by the account of him in its pages, not only in the legitimate sport of the locality, but also in the illegal pursuits in which the Chase seems to have abounded, I am informed as follows: "That sundry noble lords and Dorset esquires occasionally leagued together for the purpose of stealing each other's deer, or the deer belonging to any other proprietor, originating by their lawless proceedings much scandal, and occasionally a broken limb, as well as head," despite the beehive-looking helmets with which they crowned or tried to protect the little honey in their quasi empty heads. According to the group, as delineated in this entertaining work, Lord Mollineux, Lord Castlehaven, Mr. Sturt, Sir William Hanham, and Mr. H. Good, have padded or leathern tunics on, reaching to their knees, rendering them, like the knight's armour of old, perfectly innocuous to their foes, while their legs are left totally unguarded from briars or blows, and clothed in common stockings, with high-low shoes; but in their hands long and, in size, efficient quarter-staves. These staves, however, are too small at one end and too large at the other, at least for any successful bout at quarter-staves that ever came within my knowledge. In this quaint

old representation, they have a net on the ground between their legs, over which they seem to be keeping guard, and a large nondescript sort of dog with them; while in the distance a keeper of the Chase is watching them, curiously kneeling behind a tree, and evidently bent on bringing his bee-hived head in contact with some of theirs on the first feasible opportunity.

Perhaps one of the few pleasures in an author's path, one of the roses among the blackthorns, through which he must wend or force his way, is the power to place himself on the site of long-deserted mansions, and to hold, as it were, communion with the spirits of those who, in times long gone by, had breathed the same air he breathed, as it swept over the sweet wild face of the country; felt the same warmth from that ever living and mysterious Lord of Light, still illuminating the world; and plucked from the bank the same age on age descended wild flower, that greeted him in his retrospection of long forgotten things. In times gone by, when men were much scarcer than they are now, and animal life more plentiful, houses less frequent, and, in spite of the boasted march of education, crime less rife, it must have been very beautiful to range over uninterrupted downs, and through forests and chases where the graceful deer wandered at their will. Through glades of green grass turf, and vistas of wood towered over by the knarled boughs of ancient oaks, or in spring brilliantly variegated by the young

and brighter green of the birch and beech, standing out or mingled in lovely contrast with the oak and holly and other forest trees of darker foliage. Fresher, sweeter, and more boundlessly beautiful were England's landscapes then than they are now, and the labouring classes much more comfortable and happy, because better known to and more dependent on their employers, and better cared for in times of unmerited distress. Increase of population, and the selfish restlessness of demagogues seeking to make themselves a name out of the ignorance of those they had talked into groundless grievances, ill-directed education and indiscriminate charity, where no sort of difference is sought to be made between the blackest felons and the deserving and honest poor, have done much to embolden a boasted peasantry in the wrong. To set them above themselves in model dwellings they never wished for, and to make them other than what their forefathers were, when each man loved his lord or suzerain, worked for him and guarded him, respecting him for the protection he gave and the care bestowed when sickness assailed the cottage door.

It was on a Saturday, in a very early spring, that I once found myself driving through the still rather wild and undulating country that lies between Wimborne in Dorsetshire, the little rural vilage of Horton, and the once splendid Cranbourne Chase. My sole object in taking that drive was to put myself on the

site of "Woodlands House," famed in former times for its sporting owner and sporting attributes; but now its glories are passed away, and nothing is left of the mansion but the walls of an old chapel belonging to it, the same of a portion of the stables, a remnant also of some other parts of the building, with walls running here and there, that might have once supported rooms, or simply been the confines of gardens, a bowling green, or summer houses. Then to the south, and most probably at that time looked upon by the front windows, lay evident traces of a large fish-pond, about an acre or more in extent, with a number of smaller stews for table-fish lying conveniently nearer to the house, all fed by a clear and pebbly little brook, whose bed in the good old days was higher up towards the house than it is now, and whose stream, though its old master is gone, still runs on, and will run on, for ever.

Woodlands House, or the remnant of it, is now the property of Lord Shaftesbury, but too far from St. Giles' ever to have been an object for scenery. Therefore it appears to me that the oak timber has all been cut as it became ripe, as, with two exceptions, I could find no trees there or thereabouts that, when conjured by me to tell me tales of other days, had or seemed to have anything to say. To these two trees I may perhaps have again to refer during the future course of my narrative; but as the spirits of the by-gone time—mental myths from the mighty dead—must shadow

forth the line my labours are to pursue, free from all mortal fetter, I proceed to take in hand the author's wand, and to bring before my readers at least some traits of those who have long been gathered to the silent tomb, whether in graveyard, village church, or in cathedral marble. If in the course of my narration I do not tie myself strictly to dates, the reader will perhaps forgive me, for of course there must be much in ancient narratives that would in the present day be trite and uninteresting, while at the same time, enveloped in the storied mass, there may be a vast deal to instruct as well as amuse, if selected with a careful hand, and linked together with the real love and danger that *did* exist long before the age in which we live.

With this preliminary chapter to my firm intent, I take leave of the reader, not without the hope that he or she, whichever it may be, will stroll by my side through forests, fields, and flowers, halls and battles, without being wearied, or having even a wish to halt them by the way.

Well, then, those *were* merry days in the "good green wood," whether "Lady Alice" was "singing blithely" there or not, and if this little ancient history of "Cranbourne Chase" now before me speaks true, man had little else to do than to put salt on the "single" of a buck to insure himself a couple of haunches; deer, or their joints, in my day, would have

been seen at very few tables, if the noble or ignoble conclave of deer-killers, herein alluded to, had been the sole instigators of "vert and venerie;" for the herds would have been infinitely too wary to have come within their "toils," or have been taken in their "nooses;" but I suppose with the growth of civilization, *as it is called*, and so many enemies or schoolmasters being abroad, deer, like other formerly innocent things, have advanced in cunning; and as that delicious little bird said, with a sigh, to the spit on which he was roasting, "non sum qualis eram," the herds may also say they are not the deer they were, and not to be had for asking.

Alas! one deer leads to another; so having descanted sufficiently on the denizens of the wilds, I will now come to other matters greatly tending to create an interest and amuse the hour. Hie then with me, most courteous reader, to Burseystool Lodge in Cranbourne Chase, as it once was, on a lovely summer's afternoon! There, there *is* a view, that can nowhere be so sweetly exhibited as in an English chase or forest! See this little horse-path or bridle-way, which divides the two counties of Wilts and Dorset, running as it does through the centre of the three walks, "Rushmere," "Stablefoot," and "Cobley;" then it opens out on an open glade of velvet grass, and on a deerkeeper's lodge, on a bench on one side of the honeysuckled porch of which sits a sweetly pretty girl with her knitting on her knee.

Oh, what an afternoon! If gracious Heaven accorded to the human race no other bounty than mere breath, 'twould be bliss to breathe the scented air on such an eve as this, to taste in its freshness the sighs that ascend from the dewy grass, and to hear the sweet concert of song that melodiously mingles from every bosky brake, and hawthorn dingle, and surrounding thicket! The leveret and the frisking little rabbits, the latter but late from out their "stop," skip on the grass at the edge of the thick cover, while graceful does coquettishly surround the lordly buck, as if aware that with the increasing weight of his sleek and trembling sides, comes also a greater inclination to idle sleep, and a consequent inefficient watch over his own safety. He nods his growing antlers at the teasing flies, the velvet on the horn yet in its tenderest state, and flaps his ears to scare away the insect foe; but they, the younger does, the graceful houris of the herd, scan everything with their full dark searching eyes, and if the antlered monarch of the lawn should be approached by anything that menaced danger, one short cry, and a conceited little toss of the head from the doe on watch, and many twinkling feet bound off to find a better safety.

The June afternoon or evening was yet early, when suddenly one of the houris of the herd, one of the watchful young does before mentioned, not old enough yet to have a dappled fawn among the fern, looked up from grazing on the turf, and pricking her ears, gazed,

as if in some alarm, in one direction. The hare sat up on her hinder legs and "mused," while several old rabbits thumped with the hinder foot upon the ground, and sent the sleek little denizens of the stops, tumbling over one against the other in terror to their nests.

Something approached, *that* was quite evident, the bucks that had been lying down knew it now, for they rose and stretched themselves, still leaving all further decision to the does, and waiting for a signal whether to feed or fly. All heads were up, all eyes turned to a corner in the direction of the lodge, where one ride came down to, and opened into, the one to which I have already introduced the reader; the waving of the female dress now glanced here and there between the boughs, and its wearer came at last fully confessed into the ride wherein were the watchful deer. The does at once lost all apprehension of danger, the bucks no longer kept their ears pricked forward to catch an indefinite sound, the hare and the rabbit settled down again to crop the short herbage, and the girl turned from the direction of the wild things, and joined the keeper's daughter, who, as we have seen, was seated on her bench by her father's honeysuckle-surrounded door.

The keeper's daughter arose with an air of respect for a superior, but which was strongly and genially warmed up by affection for a person, and in a moment two as pretty faces as need be touched each other with a kiss that seemed to enliven the only thing except the

two that gave it, and that was the robin who had been sharing the bench with "Mary,"—for I must give the first of our acquaintances a name,—and eating from her hand some crumbs. The little bird bluffed out the red feathers on his breast, dipped his head up and down, murmured a little warble, and flew off, perhaps to kiss his mate, who sat in her neat little nest in a hole in the wall close by.

Well, but now we know that one of these girls was called "Mary," it is time, to prevent mystification, to know the name of the other.

She was tall and fair, and no painter, no sculptor could imagine—they are not, however, always the best judges—a creature more gracefully beautiful in feature and in form than this fair girl. No "splendid failure" *there,* as my friend "D'Orsay" said of the statue of the "Greek Slave." Complexion and limb, hair and air, in each or all perfection was exemplified, and she really could not speak nor move without disclosing some further attractions; when, having thus introduced the heroine of my true tale, known throughout the two adjoining counties as "The Fair Doe of Fernditch," for any further conception of her beauty I must leave the public to their own ideas in a matter too, wherein opinions are said occasionally, and very widely, to differ.

These pretty friends, the rustic beauty and the beauty of the better class, for the "Fair Doe" was born

a gentlewoman, were soon seated side by side in loving conversation. The parents of the latter, through misfortunes of one sort or the other, and deficient in means, had descended in the scale of life, to be referred mainly to the want of providence in the father, who had but lately paid the great debt of nature, and been gathered to the tomb, the only debt, so his neighbours said, he ever paid ; so that she was speaking of her sorrows, both father and mother being dead, when the short sharp note of warning from a watchful doe, cognisant at last of the approach of man, and therefore probably of danger, rang through the sweet air of June, and sent each innocent creature flying from the dreaded presence. Another instant and the inculcator of terror in this early summer scene, rode in sight, the worshipful and honourable "Master Henry Hastings," "by his quality" described in the Earl of Shaftesbury's manuscript memoir, page 18, as "son, brother, and uncle, to the Earls of Huntingdon."

Apparently the rider had come but to see one of his game cocks, which he had walked at the keeper's house, the custom being to send a game cock chicken, or "stag," as the young bird is termed, with a couple of barndoor hens, to be reared by the keeper, the couple of hens being the keeper's property by way of wages for his care; but when he saw the two girls, he reined in his horse for a moment, as if unexpectedly struck with the appearance of one !

In stature, "Mr. Hastings" was low, but very strong in his limbs, and active; his hair, of a reddish-flaxen hue, shaded a broad full brow, still ruddy cheeks though past the heyday of youth, with lips compressed, and a large and ample and rather protruding thick set jaw. From head to foot he was "clothed in green," the only colour he was ever known to wear, and according to the manuscript already quoted, his whole suit was "never all worth, when new, five pounds." The picture which, at this the present period, hangs over the chimneypiece in the Hall at St. Giles', the seat of Lord Shaftesbury, represents Mr. Hastings at a much later time of his jolly long life, than the one on which I am now descanting. It is the portrait of a very old man, with beard, moustache, and hair as white as snow, and cheeks sunken through the passage of very many years. His long tunic or frock coat, reaching nearly to his heels is green, the hue he always wore; but the painter has put on his head a brown hat, which certainly in his earlier years was not the colour of his choice. He has a ruff at his neck, and ruffles at his wrists, and spurs on, with a long hawking pole, as it appears to me, in his hand, and must have been a good-looking man.

For a moment, then, this verdant knight of the old school, reined in his horse. People said, as they are ever apt to say when a pretty girl and a rich man are sometimes thrown together, that this doughty champion of

female beauty and of every sort of sport, more often visited the lodges where there chanced to reside a pretty girl, wife or maid, than he did others which contained no more than ordinary folks, and his own game cock. But had it not been for the "manuscript memoir," I should have discarded such envious rumours; as it stands, however, as a faithful historian, I cannot entirely eschew the following extensive and historic passage.* "The house of Mr. Hastings was perfectly of the old fashion, in the midst of a large park, well stocked with deer, and near the house, rabbits to serve his kitchen, many fishponds, and great store of wood and timber, a bowling green in it, long, cut, and narrow, full of high ridges, it never being levelled since it was ploughed—they used round sand bowls—and it had a banqueting house like a stand for a racecourse, a large one built in a tree. He kept all manner of sport hounds, that ran buck, fox, hare, otter, and badger," (what glorious fun!) "and hawks, long and short-winged; he had all sorts of nets for fishing. In the New Forest he had a walk, and the Manor of Christchurch: this last supplied him with sea and river fish, and, indeed, all his neighbours' grounds and royalties were free to him who bestowed all his time in these sports, but what he borrowed to caress his neighbours'

* This sketch of Mr. Hastings was published in the "Gentleman's Magazine," vol. xxiv. 1754; and in 1755 again in the "Connoisseur."

wives and daughters; there being not a woman in all his "walks," of the degree of a yeoman's wife or under, and under the age of forty, but it was extremely her fault if he was not—"intimately kind." This made him very popular with the lower classes, always speaking kindly to husband, brother, or father, who were, to boot, very welcome to his house whenever they came. There they found beef, pudding, and small beer in great plenty, and his house not so neatly kept as to shame them or their dusty shoes."

The moment Mr. Hastings reined in his horse, and fixed his keen, light blue eyes on the two girls, that minute they hushed their conversation; the Fair Doe of Ferndítch passed beneath the honeysuckle into the keeper's lodge, and Mary, out-blushing the moss rose of her own little garden, with a low curtsey came down the path to the wicket gate to meet him.

"Ha, ha! Mary," exclaimed the jovial voice of Mr. Hastings, "whom have you with you? By the mass, two such does are seldom seen together, and no buck here; hey, Mary, no buck to watch for? Come tell me, who is yonder girl who vanished at my approach? Unharbour the *deer*, and make her known to me."

Saying this, Mr. Hastings dismounted, and hanging his bridle-rein on a hook at the gate, he stood by Mary's side, and waited for an answer.

"Oh, sir," Mary replied, still blushing and laughing, "she is a great friend of mine, though much above a

poor girl like me. She's come to lodge at Fernditch with the keeper's wife, for she's lately left an orphan, and needs to be quiet and at rest."

"Ah ha, Mary, then at last I bethink me I have seen the girl whom the people all call 'the Fair Doe of Fernditch.' Well, I'm sorry for her sorrows, and would comfort her were it in my power. Let me in to bid her the compliments of the world."

Mary turned at once to do his bidding, though she knew her friend would sooner be alone; yet she did not quite see how she could refuse the wish of one regarded with so much respect by her father and all the other keepers and master-keepers of the Chase. So, with a slower step than usual, she led the way, and entering the porch, disclosed to view the "Fair Doe" seated in the little parlour.

Mr. Hastings in a moment saw that the fair creature before him was well born and gently bred; so taking off his hat with great apparent deference, he told her he was very glad she had come to the wild woods of the Chase to give a better grace to the locality, and hoped she would remain for some time.

With a manner unembarrassed, retiring, but very graceful, the "Fair Doe" thanked him for the gentleness of his expressions, and said, "she hoped to find in the beauty of the woods rest and retirement for a time: she had indeed sought them for that especial purpose and no other."

There was in her tone and manner, though perfectly gracious and kind, something which spoke so strongly of a desire to be alone, that Mr. Hastings, well versed in matters of the human heart as well as of the chase as he was, at once saw that if he wished to have her good opinion, for the present at least he had better no longer intrude; so taking her kindly by the hand, he assured her that while inhabiting any portion of the Chase, known to be all-powerful as he was, she never need want a protector, for that his hand and his house, if she required either, should ever be at her service. And thus saying, he quitted the lodge, went with Mary to look at his game cock, gave her a kiss, mounted his horse, and rode away.

When they were left to themselves again, Mary explained why and how she came to bring Mr. Hastings in, and make him known to her; and then in the cool of the evening, the two friends walked to the Fernditch Lodge together, the son of the keeper at Fernditch taking on himself the pleasurable task of escorting Mary back to her home after it was dark.

A stroll through that Chase in the month of June, on a fine starlight night, when the glowworm lures her lover from the skies, and the deep, rich, sweet voice of the nightingale, falling in its mellow cadence, or rising in its brilliant strain, imitated here and there by the "white throat," among the reeds or brambles, is happiness itself; but when a young man is accompanied by

a sweetly pretty girl, why that fact refines even gold, and throws "a better perfume on the violet," sweetens the song of Philomel, and adds effulgence to the stars. So young Will of Fernditch almost thought, as he traced the well-known ride with the girl he loved in his own plebeian fashion, but he was not of the class to make himself completely master of the situation; that is to say, he would have been "downright glad" if Mary had consented to be his "old ooman," or then and there to have submitted to his caresses; but there was no romance in his soul. He heard the nightingales, and knew "those birds *always whistled* when 'twas dark;" and he saw the stars, was aware "they were always bright," but no brighter for Mary's sake; the glowworm, too, came out to "spangle the turf as usual;" there was certainly at that moment a pretty girl with him, but not admired a whit the more because the silent witchery of heaven and earth seemed to breathe a beautiful oblivion to all else beside, and to awaken a reciprocity of trusting faith in the breast of each recipient, so natural, so free, and so beguiling, as to render vain, if really felt, the fetters awarded by Man to curb the gifts of Heaven.

In safety, even unassailed, then, the son of the keeper at Fernditch Lodge brought Mary to her home at Burseystool, and having compared notes with her father as to the advancing condition of the deer, and agreed that towards the middle or end of next month they must put on a watch against all depredators, with a hearty

good night to all, Will strolled through the ridings home; and, perhaps, "whistled as he went for want of thought."

June, like all else that is beautiful, soon passed away, and it was a still starlight night in the end of July, when a party of what was then called "deer-hunters," dressed in, as they termed it, "cap and jack," according to the engraving, which I take to have meant "beehive and leathern tunic," sallied forth in Burseystool and the adjoining walk, with a net or "toil," to rob the Chase of the deer belonging to their personal friends as well as others. The gentlemen deer-stealers were joined on this occasion by a soldier, named Blandford, and a party of labourers from Pimperne, who had disguised themselves, for the occasion. Having set the "toils" across an open glade, from which one of their party had been sent, with great gentleness, simply to move a herd of male deer, and to shift them from their "feed" to a lawn a little further on, the party then sent two or three of their number, with a large lurcher or deer-dog, who ran mute, to circumvent the herd, and to drive them back again; slipping the dog at the herd the moment the deer had begun to retreat in the direction desired, so to drive them headlong on the net.

The noise of the bounding feet of some fifty deer was soon heard by the *noblemen* and *gentlemen* left in ambush, and this amounted to a terrific rush when the deer found themselves chased from the rear, and

driven, before they were aware of it, right upon the "toils." The natural consequence was, that the does sprang right and left, high and low, some over the net, some on either side, crashing into the thickets; while the bucks, many of them, charged headlong into the toils, in an endeavour to force the passage. Some went furiously into the net, where their still velvet-covered and "unburnished" antlers soon became entangled, while others cleared the struggling mass, and went clean over it as it fell with the weight of the three or four bucks that were really hampered; and on these hampered deer, the gentlemen deer-hunters, or more properly, deer-stealers, threw themselves; and, amidst kicks and cuffs, and some cries from the deer, knives were pulled out, and the throats of the bucks cut to render further struggle impossible.

The deer had ceased to struggle, and the deer-stealers stood for a time over them, to catch their breath again after their exertion, and to prepare to carry the ill-gotten spoil away. Three goodly bucks and a heavy net, with the poles necessary to support it, were no light weight, and it required all the party, of whatever class, and they were mixed, gentlemen and labourers, with the sergeant of dragoons, who was quartered at Blandford, to lend an equal hand in bearing the spoils and the toils away In addition to the quarter-staves with which the bee-hive helmeted gentlemen were armed, the lower class of their companions had swingels,

or flails, most dangerous weapons in an open or defensive fight, but occasionally, at close quarters, doing some harm to friends as well as foes.

After a time, however, the three bucks were slung on poles, as well as the toils, when, just as the depredators were moving off, a rough and determined voice, directly ahead of them and right in their path, uttered the word "stand;" and in the darkness of the glade a darker line made by a party of deer-keepers came on, leaving not a doubt of their intention to assail.

Down went the venison, and down went the heavy toils; each deer-stealer, gentle and simple, stood to his weapon, as men led by the well-born usually do, however bad their cause,—and then, to use the words of Hudibras,—

> "With many a clink and many a bang
> Hard crab-tree and old iron rang."

For the deer-keepers had hangers as well as short staves; though at first they were loth to use the more dangerous weapon. However, at the beginning of the outset a blow from the flail of the sergeant of dragoons broke the kneepan of one of the deer-keeper's best men, and disabled him then and there: when, though the keepers of the Chase fought stoutly against a larger force than themselves, they were getting the worst of it, from the overlength of the flails and the shortness of their own otherwise more effective arms,

when Thomas Handiman, of Fernditch Lodge, the father of young Will, to whom we have already introduced the reader, passed the word to his son and to his men to give ground and let their assailants seem to drive them beneath and in among the thicker trees.

All obeyed. There is ever the chance of being defeated by retreating; and, unless you have your own men well in hand, retreat may lead to running. Not so in this instance, however. Tom Handiman, well seconded by Will, was obeyed to the letter, disputing the ground inch by inch, but for the time getting the worst of it. Tom and his men backed in among the thick trees, into which, and under an idea that the keepers were beaten, the deer-stealers followed in full belief that they had won the fight. No sooner were the assailed and assailing well in the thick trees, than the short hangers of the keepers came into better play; swingels and flails, and sweeping blows with quarter-staves were out of the question. The keepers took to their hangers and soon turned the tide of fight. The sergeant of dragoons, who, among the canaille of the party of deer-stealers was regarded as a redoubtable leader, came into a hand-to-hand fight with Will, who, at that moment, excited by the remembrance of Mary, perhaps, fought with uncommon desperation; when, as the sergeant pressed upon him to get possession of his hanger, the flail having become totally unwieldy, Will struck with such vengeance that

he severed the soldier's arm at the wrist, and then knocked him down with the hilt of his hanger, and set his foot upon him. "Sauve qui peut," was then the cry among the thieves, gentle and simple. All who were standing took to flight, leaving the three bucks and the toils in the possession of the keepers, and several prisoners, one of whom was the severely wounded Sergeant Blandford, who, oddly enough, was quartered in the town of the same name.

One of the keepers had three ribs broken from the blow of a flail, of which injury he subsequently died, while others were more or less wounded. The deer-stealers, who ultimately surrendered, were all badly cut and bruised; and the sergeant of dragoons, Blandford, would have bled to death had the keepers not made one of their garters into a tourniquet and tightly tied up his arm. This man was so weak from loss of blood, that he had to be carried to Ferndith, as the nearest resting-place, and laid on a bed hastily made on the floor, the only spare bedroom being occupied by the Fair Doe; and there he lay the ghastly occupant of a little room, with his severed hand stuck up in the window by way of trophy, to mar the comfort and destroy the privacy of a young gentlewoman who had sought that humble roof as a temporary solace from affliction.

The less-injured of the deer-stealers were conveyed to other lodges or places of safe keeping; but the

sergeant, thus maimed, and a prisoner to the prowess of Will, was of course carried, as we have shown, to the nearest place, and a surgeon sent for to attend him. While there, to add to the disquietude of the Fair Doe, two young officers came over from Blandford to see their wounded sergeant, and the magistrate who also attended was no other than Mr. Hastings. He came very often, more often perhaps than he had need to have come; and having previously been introduced to the "Fair Doe," on one pretence or another, he always saw her. From the two young officers she had no annoyance; they probably did not know that anything so beautiful was there, when, as Mary devoted all the time she could spare from her own labours at home, to attend upon her friend, the "Fair Doe" met with as little annoyance, under the circumstances, as could be expected.

When able to be removed, the sergeant with his companions were committed to the custody of Dorchester gaol, and his hand having been given up to his friends and relations who were resident at Pimperne, it was buried by them with great solemnity in the churchyard, as *rumour said,* with the "honours of war." The sentence on the deer-stealers was (those that were taken were all of the labouring class, the "*gentlemen*," as they were called, having fought their way through their opponents), that they were to be transported for seven years; but the judge, having

played some pranks himself after deer perhaps, melted in his severity, and, in consideration of their great suffering from their wounds while in prison, commuted his better sentence to imprisonment for an indefinite term. By a great laxity of judgment the sergeant was not dismissed from His Majesty's service, but was permitted to retire on half-pay, or on a pension, and so provided with funds which just enabled him to set up a shop for the illicit dealing in venison and game, or in any other contraband articles brought to him by the thieves in London, for in the metropolis he had selected to reside.

On one of Mr. Hastings' visits to Fernditch Lodge, he offered the comforts of his own house to the Fair Doe, and assured her that she had it in her power to be, in that large building, as private as she could desire; and when he first made this offer, the wounded man was lying at the Lodge, and the little domicile was anything but agreeable or private. Nothing could exceed the kindness of his manner in making this proposal, and Mary for her life could not understand why it was not at once gratefully accepted; but the fact was, the Fair Doe, knowing nothing of the antecedents of Mr. Hastings, and not quite comprehending what Mary meant by saying he was a "gay man," did not think it was right to go there alone and unattended to by anyone. At last, however, her scruples were overcome, and she assented, taking Mary, however, with

her, to be also his guest; and thus on a bright, mellow, golden day in August, the Fair Doe and Mary arrived at the mansion of Mr. Hastings, to be received by his housekeeper with all attention certainly, but also with a sullen scowl.

Mr. Hastings being out buck-hunting—for in August the venison in the Chase was at its best—the housekeeper took on herself to show her guests over the house, so faithfully described by Lord Shaftesbury's manuscript, to this day extant in St. Giles's:—"The great hall was strewn with marrow bones and full of hawks' perches, hounds, spaniels, and terriers; the upper sides of the hall were hung with the fox skins of that and the last year's killing, and here and there the skin of a polecat intermixed; gamekeepers' and huntsmen's poles in abundance."

The housekeeper having escorted the Fair Doe and Mary through the great hall, and repelled the fawnings of some of the sporting dogs and the growls of others, they then came to the parlour, or what would now be the drawing-room. This was—"A large long room, similarly furnished and occupied as the hall, for, on a great hearth, paved with brick, lay some terriers and the choicest hounds and spaniels; seldom but two or three of the great chairs had litters of young cats in them, which were not to be disturbed, he" (Mr. Hastings) "having always three or four attending him at dinner, to keep whom in order, and to enforce peace between

the dogs and cats. Mr. Hastings had a little white round stick of fourteen inches long lying by his trencher, that he might maintain obedience and defend such meat as he had no mind to part with to them. The windows, which were very large, served for places to lay his arms in, cross-bows, stone-bows, and such like accoutrements. The corners of the room were full of the best-chosen hunting and hawking poles, and there was an oyster table at the lower end, which was in constant use twice a day all the year round: for he never failed to eat oysters before dinner and supper through all seasons. The neighbouring Town of Poole," so the housekeeper informed the guests, as the manuscript informs us, "supplied him with those fish."

"The upper part of the room had two small tables and a desk; on the one side of which was a 'Church Bible,' and on the other, the 'Book of Martyrs.' On the tables were hawks' hoods, bells, and such like, two or three old *green* hats, with the crowns thrust in, so as to hold ten or a dozen eggs of a pheasant kind of poultry, which he took much care of, and fed himself; tables, dice, cards, and boxes were not wanting. In the hole of the desk were stores of tobacco, and pipes that had been used. On one side of the end of this room was the door of a closet, wherein stood the strong beer and the wine, which never came thence but in single glasses, that being the rule of the house exactly ob-

served; for he never exceeded in drink himself, or permitted excess in his house. On the other side was a door into an old chapel, not used for devotion; the pulpit, as the safest place of refuge, was never empty of a cold chine of beef, venison pasty, gammon of bacon, or great apple 'pye,' with thick crust extremely baked. 'His table,' so we learn, 'cost him not much, though it was good to eat at; his sports supplied all but beef and mutton, except Fridays, when he had the best salt fish, as well as other fish, that he could get; and Friday was the day that his neighbours of best quality most visited him.' "

This, and very much more, his housekeeper narrated to the newly arrived guests, but not as if she had any pleasure in doing so, and when she had finished the office of showing them over the house, she ushered them to their rooms, which were adjoining each other, and told them that she did not expect her master home from the Chase till supper time, when she would summon them to the table.

The two girls sat talking to each other in the Fair Doe's chamber for some time, when, as the afternoon grew later, they resolved to risk being worried by the dogs they had seen of all descriptions, and to take a stroll in the rough but quaintly laid out garden. While thus engaged, the joyful baying of a hound in the distance was heard; the deep-tongued boom was quickly taken up by canine barks of lesser pathos; nearer and

nearer still to the old mansion came their cries, till at length the entire approach through the park rang with the joyful melody, which was again and again replied to from hall and parlour beneath the roof. There could be no doubt but that the owner of all the dogs they had seen had returned from the Chase, and was at this moment greeted by his quadruped companions and friends. In a very few minutes a favourite hound came gambolling into the garden, followed by Hastings himself, with three favourite cats, tails on end, purring round his legs.

Dressed as he ever was, from head to foot in green, the green hat was doffed in an instant, as with a sweeping bow he came up to shake hands with and to welcome the Fair Doe to "his poor place," and to chuck the smiling Mary under the chin. Then, after the exchange of a few commonplace compliments, he offered the Fair Doe his hand, and led her into supper, or rather to the preliminary of the approaching supper, which, as usual, commenced at the oyster-table. The pulpit, in this instance, preached of plenty and an ample repast, and when an attendant waiting-man bore in a "London pudding," a viand which his store-room or pulpit never wanted, Mr. Hastings accompanied its advent to the table with a song. Singing the words in a low voice, accompanied by a jolly, luminous, and ludicrously expressive smile, waving the carving-knife in his hand, as if leading a chorus :—

"From London town, this pudding's name,
By hollow courtiers eaten,
But 'twill prove a pudding tame,
Unless the egg's well beaten.
Part is made of cream, ha, ha!
Part is made of flower,
Part is made of sweet, ha, ha!
Part is made of sour,
But *my* part lies therein 'a *
When shall I call in Oa!
Thy good fellows and mine-a."

Having prefaced the dainty dish thus, he then proceeded to press his pretty guests to try its flavour.

Wine, of which he never drank during his meals more than a glass or two, was always set out in a solitary bottle apart from his sacred cupboard cellar, and from this bottle, on this occasion, he pressed his two young friends to permit him to help them; or, if they preferred it, to taste "his sack with syrup of gilliflower in it." At his elbow, then as ever, stood a glass holding about a pint of small beer, which he often "stirred with rosemary." And jolly and courteous the sporting host was, and most civil and attentive, without being obtrusive, to the Fair Doe, whom it was evident that he most intensely admired. An end must come to all evenings, however happily the time may pass in their presence, when thus, at the family hour of nine o'clock, he bid his pretty guests good night, the housekeeper

* A manuscript copy of this very old song is extant at St. Giles's.

making her appearance to show them to their rooms; and when they departed, he slipped off his green coat and boots, and sank luxuriously into a sort of wrapper or dressing-gown, and down into a capacious arm-chair, selecting from his blackened and well-used pipes, a bowl of comfortable size to fume him into a dreamy state of listless, but not intemperate pleasure.

"What sport we had to-day!" he murmured to himself, through the wreaths of ascending smoke; "that Fernditch Doe's too charming—old Trimbush! how he ran his nose along the tendrils, twigs, and brambles that *might* have touched the buck as he passed, when the hard and dusty track refused to hold a line of scent. She is, she is the fairest doe that ever trod the lawn. Aye—didn't I see his stern proudly waving when he found himself right in his 'quest,' yet hadn't enough to speak to. Such a face and form as the Doe has I never saw before! and didn't I tell 'em so. Zounds, the varlets have not put the customary modicum of gilliflower syrup in my cup of sack! Here all of you out there, d'ye hear, ye knaves and cuckolds? Come hither one on ye or all, and bring the syrup."

"Coming, sir," was speedily the reply; when Hastings continued again, in a smiling, sleepy, and luxurious tone of tobacco reverie. "'Coming,' of course you are!" he repeated; "ha, ha! you all seem to know your names. The parson or devil-dodger here abouts, and Dorset's rather full on 'em, of the sin-abetting sort, blames me

for giving things their right name. Oh, the sweet, sweet Doe, there's nothing like her! Ha, ha! if I don't know what they are, those varlets, every mother's son of 'em—then my favourite spaniel don't know me! Ha, ha, ha!"

The sack was right and the glass drained, the weed was smoked and the pipe went out, and with many a jolly chuckle and oft-repeated sigh, as to the charms of a certain Doe, Master Hastings vacated his parlour for his sleepful bed. True to his "lids," "tired nature's soft restorer, balmy sleep," always "lit," for his were "eyes" not often "sullied with a tear." This healthful method of life, ever out in the open air, ever after pleasurable things, ever occupied in one round of amusement or the other, and his brain never vexed or wearied with study or affairs of weight, or his limbs cramped by sedentary occupations, all tended to lengthen life, and to mark him out as one "loved by the gods," and destined "to die young." He never, throughout his long existence "lost his eyesight, but always wrote and read without spectacles, and got on horseback without help. Until past fourscore, he rid to the death of a stag as well as any, and eventually died in his hundredth year."

In this instance, when in bed, our jolly sportsman fell asleep murmuring of that "too, too lovely Doe;" and then in dreams of her passed a refreshing night. Sweet thoughts in the waking soul are never wearisome

to the slumbering body. On the contrary, newly awaking hopes of ambitious love tend to create an increase of life and add a lustre to the sun's first and freshest beam, a gorgeous promise to the approaching summer's day. The love of a manly man does not make *him* pine away; difficulty adds to zest, and strengthens the will to conquer.

On the following morning, as to the hour of their host's rising the two guests could have but little doubt, for no sooner did he look from his window to judge of what the coming day might be, and to take a full draught into his deep, broad chest of the fresh air, than the very sound of his casement caused a watchful dog of some sort or other to greet him with a yell of pleasure, and which greeting being understood by all the others, from that instant canine life began, hounds bayed, and spaniels and terriers joined their less musical tongues in a sort of chorus, that however delightful it might be to the early riser, was death to the slumbers of less active people. "A snap," as Mr. Hastings termed it at "the pulpit's grace," and one glass of strong beer from the cupboard or cellar in the parlour, of which he always kept the key, fortified the jovial sportsman until his return to breakfast at eight o'clock. And away he went, either to visit his traps set for marten-cats, polecats, or stoats and weasels, or to seek some animal of chase, or pipe quails into a net,—for, in the days to which this tale refers, England held thousands

of those delicious birds: we scarcely ever meet with one now.

Punctually at eight o'clock, as the two girls entered the parlour, in came Mr. Hastings, hungry and jolly after his morning's sport; and they sat down to a very substantial repast. All restraint in his manner had worn off, and in a frank, open-hearted way he addressed his guests as "my dears," and hoped they had slept well in spite of his dogs, and that they were very hungry.

"Ho, ho, ho!" he exclaimed, intensely amused at some news he had heard; "what shall we come to next! Oh, my dears, what now, but they can't be contented with the songs of birds, the dulcimer, the lute, and sackbut, but they must establish what they call a musical club. What a club has to do with an instrument of harmony except to break it, I don't know. We have a little inn near here on an eminence on 'Salisbury South Plain,' called 'The Hut;' it has a beautiful view from it of the Chase, as well as over a fine country towards the Isle of Wight, the rocks of which, on a clear day, are well in sight, as also the Christchurch Tower ere you get to them. How I came to know this fact is as follows: There is a good gentleman, I don't mean it for a joke, but his name's 'Good,' has dubbed himself leader of this here band; *how* he keeps ahead on em's more than I can tell, for, to my mind, they must all go contrary ways, and sweat and

grunt, puff and scrape, every man on 'em after his own fashion! But, however, he *is* the leader of this here band. Well, it is his usual custom, as their club day, as they call it, is on a Monday, to walk over to the Hut after Divine service in his parish church, to arrange the music-books and instruments for the next day. Leastways, my dears, that is what *he says he goes there for;* but, to my mind, he's more after a pipe and a cool tankard of beer. Last Sunday, after church, it was a very hot day, as you may recollect, and as psalm-singing is thirsty work, as the devil-dodgers, them parsons, often say 'they thirst after religion;' but I think it's more after drink. Last Sunday was just the afternoon for a cool pull at the home-brewed, and in the natural course of them there things Master Good finds himself snug enough at the lonely Hut. Well, Master Good *says* 'he was standing at the door with the host for the benefit of the air,'—but the benefit was to the tap and the host, I'll warrant, not to the wind,—and as they were in conversation, what does he see but a herd of good fat bucks leave one of the large woods, where he *says*, 'they had been much exposed to the sun, and annoyed by the flies,"—the sun is all fudge, because in a large wood the trees would have kept the sun off. Well, he says he saw them leave that there wood, 'cross the open, and enter a small detached cover for shade.' Ha! shade in the little wood but not in the big one. Stuff!

"Master Good did not keep up his pretended conversation long after he had seen the deer; if he did, it was just long enough for him to find out the innkeeper had not seen them; so he says, 'he wished him good morning,' though it was really afternoon, if not evening, and off he goes, *as if* he was going to his own dwelling. Presently the innkeeper holloas out after him, 'Hey, sir, but you've forgot to arrange your books and musical instruments.' 'Books be d——d,' says Good to himself. 'Never mind,' he calls out aloud, 't'will do to-morrow morning.' So off Good goes till he gets well out of sight, and then he comes back in a round-about way to where he knew the bucks had harboured themselves. Now comes the fat on it, my dears. Out he pulls some of his music papers; that would'nt have hurt the deer, but in among them were his deer-nooses, showing that though t'was the Lord's day, he did not come out at peace with everything. Well, he creeps into all the pathways down wind of where the bucks were lying, as near to them as he dare to go without putting the herd off, and sets every man jack of the nooses he had in his pocket in the different paths and 'deer-leaps.' Then he goes a-whistling, as if quite unconcerned about the deer, with his pockets full of stones, and every now and then jerked a good stone up into the trees of the little cover, to create just alarm enough to make the bucks move about. This kind of game didn't last long, for a buck got caught

in one of the nooses, and his struggles of course set all the herd to their heels by the other paths and 'leaps,' and in their haste two more bucks were caught in two other nooses. In makes Master Good, cuts the throats of the three bucks, and being aware of an old sawpit not far off, he drags his ill-gotten venison into it, 'grullocks' the deer, covers them over with grass and boughs, and then thinks what next is to be done, as it wouldn't do to risk being caught by the keepers. Well, up he climbs into a tall oak tree full of branches, which commanded a view of the whole walk, took his book—t'warnt a prayer-book, you may be sure—out of his pocket, and amused himself by reading it till night-fall; then, the coast being as he thought clear, off he goes to his own house. Once there, he sends round to a lot of other deer-stealers, when a small party of them, well after dark, with a horse and cart, accompanied him to carry off, as they thought, the venison, with many jokes about the feasts they would have. On coming to the wood, the first thing they had to do was to find the old sawpit; when they found it, 'Now then,' says Master Good to Master Hanham, 'you get down and put this here cord round their heads, and you heave behind and we'll pull away.'

"Down goes Mr. Hanham with the cord in his hand into the pit, and gropes and stamps about in the pitchy darkness of the hole.

"'Where the devil are the bucks?' says he. 'There

are *no* deer here. You've tricked me, Good. I'm groping among grullocks!'

"'No deer?' says Mr. Good. 'Come, come, *you're* only joking. I caught and cut their throats; three as goodly bucks as we ever had; and we're going to have the fry at the club to-morrow.'

"'I knows you did, Mr. Good,' says a strange voice from the bushes; 'but as to the fry, that's not here nor there where you wishes as it was; I'm bound to thank'y, sir, for admitting as you done it before this five witnesses; but I knowed that afore, and see you, arter the job, sit up aloft in the tree like a crow over a dead hare.'

"As he said this, father and son before mentioned, and other men from Fernditch Walk, came out of the bushes and stood by the sawpit.

"Upon this, so the keepers report to me, Messrs. Good, Hanham, and the rest on 'em, burst out a laughing, and all said, 'Well, we'd sooner you'd left us the deer, than made fools on us.'"

"Well, then," said the Fair Doe of Fernditch, deeply interested in the success of Mary's father and brother, "Mr. Good will, of course, have to pay a heavy fine."

"No," replied Mr. Hastings, "not a bit of it; the club of 'deerhunters,' as they call themselves, make common cause of it all. If one of the club gets caught and convicted, the fine comes out of their subscribed fund; so the weight of it, divided among 'em all, hurts

none of them; pity but what it did. The only good rule they have made, which savours a little of gentlemanly breeding is, that all the venison they steal, should be disposed of at home, and nothing converted into lucre; that is, it is to be eaten among themselves and their friends. No money passes unless to pay the penalty on detection.

"This has all been reported to me this morning, when, as these gentlemen deerstealers have no defence to make, and don't mean to dispute the fine, there will be no further piece of work. Now tell me, my dears, what would you like to do to-day? I am off to the chase for a buck hunt, but shall be back to dinner or to supper. A sportsman can't be tied to meal times, so you must do what you like, and dine when you like, and my housekeeper will look after you."

Thus saying, their host rose from the breakfast-table, and went out to mount his horse, accompanied to the stable yard by the two girls, who went to see his steed, and his hunting-hounds let out of their kennels.

Before Mr. Hastings, as a sailor would say, could get under weigh, there was an immense to-do in collecting and shutting-up all the other dogs, as spaniels, terriers, setters, pointers, and greyhounds, both for deer and hare, all insisted on sallying forth with their beloved master.

It was, and always is, a pretty sight to see the joyous hounds let out of their kennel of a hunting morning.

To watch their smiling countenances and glad recognition of their huntsman, and the merry twinkling of their waving "sterns!" Eyes brightly flashing, forelegs pawing high up in the air, as if to shake their owner by the hand, and then their graceful gambols with each other round and round his horse!

The two girls came up and patted the sleek neck of the stout, but well-bred bay horse, who, though inclined to squeak and play too, refrained from moving his feet lest he should tread on any of the boisterous pack, who flocked around, and ran between his legs. The only change in Mr. Hastings' attire was, that he wore good strong high and substantial thick boots, and in place of his green hat, wore a leathern hunting cap, as being more commodious in cover than a hat, and a greater protection to his head.

We must leave the Squire mounted on his short-tailed horse, with a species of black plain-handled pig-whip in his hand, for there were no gates with locks on them in those open days, to render a hammer to the whip necessary, when, having seen him depart on his way to the chase, the two girls, with their arms around each other's waists, sought the bowling-green and sat down on one of the seats, arranged during play, for the spectators.

"Well, Mary," said the Fair Doe when they became seated, "I like Mr. Hastings very much; but tell me, Mary, what did you mean by blushing as you did, when

you called him a 'gay man?' He is very good-humoured, certainly, and as yet I have never seen him out of spirits; but what *did* you mean by 'gay,' gay, Mary, *gay, gay*? Now don't begin to blush again."

The pretty Mary was "posed" at this home question, and had to cudgel all the brains in her little head for explanation.

"What, my dear young lady," she replied, "did I mean by 'gay?' Why civil-like to everybody, and always saying pretty things to every girl and woman he sees, and giving them a kiss and what not, that's all."

The Doe was silent for a little while, and then said, "Well, Mary, I hope I may never meet with a less agreeable man. I shall have to meet many in the course of my life, and if they are inclined to assume, heaven knows I shall have no one but myself to protect me. An orphan as I am, without a relation in the world that I know of, I have none to look to for protection but myself; and when I go forth among strangers, it is a lottery as to the sort of people whom I shall meet with, or as to what may be my fate."

"And why should you 'go out,' my dear young lady? Why not stay at our lodge, and always be my sister,—that is, if you don't disdain those beneath you, as I know you don't?"

"Ah, my sweet Mary," replied the Fair Doe, while she kissed Mary's forehead; "I am too poor to live in idleness. I must go forth and earn my bread. The little

money I can afford to give for my present lodging will soon be gone; so if I am ever to come back to you, I must work to enable me to do so."

"Work!" exclaimed Mary in surprise; "work! your hands are too soft and delicate to work; they are not like mine, red and hardened by, at times, very rough occupation. What work, my sweet young lady, do you think of doing? Needlework, I hope, for that you could do, and stay in our lodge; or perhaps you think of a dairy? It can't be the work of a housemaid—no, I'm sure it can't."

"No, Mary, it is to none of those situations that I am looking. When my poor dear mother was alive, and we were in better circumstances, I was educated by the best teachers in every accomplishment that a young lady ought to know. The minuet, the dance of every description, French and Italian, music and singing, embroidery, and even needle-work, were all carefully taught me; and being fond, God help me! of all accomplishments, I did my best to do my teachers credit."

"Well, but my dear young lady, what have all these accomplishments got to do with *work?*"

"They must *make work for me.* I must go out as what is called a governess, and teach those accomplishments that were taught to me as attributes to my pleasure only, to children and other girls, and take up my abode while I do so with strangers."

"Well, but my dear young lady," said Mary, "what if those strangers are not kind to you?"

"Why, then, I must leave them and try to find others who will treat me better, and whose society I *can* endure."

"Ah," said Mary, "there's one comfort,—you can always come back to our lodge; and while you are away from us, if you *must* go, won't I just about ply my needle and make a little hoard for you? that's all! Far from or near each other, my dearest young mistress, for so you are and shall be to me, we will work together; and, oh! how glad I should be to see you marry some great rich man, and then take me to be your maid."

In this way these two pretty girls passed the greater part of the day, Mary for ever castle-building in the air, and the Fair Doe levelling her fairy structures at a breath, and repressing her too sanguine expectations. The hour came when Mary had promised her mother to be back at the lodge on some business; and, in fact, it was decided that Mary and the Fair Doe should walk there together. But as the latter felt tired, and had some letters to write respecting the employment she was seeking, Mary went alone, under a promise to return as soon as she could.

The day sped on, and before Mary started for the lodge the two girls partook of an early dinner, and then the Fair Doe, having finished her letters, repaired in the

afternoon to the garden, followed by several spaniels and a large, graceful deer, or "gaze hound," called Rufus; for, after Mr. Hastings had been some time gone, some of the favourite dogs, who were to be depended upon, were let out again, many of them seeming now to regard the Fair Doe as part of the family, followed her into the garden and tried to win her caresses.

And as she was thus proceeding to a favourite spot in the gardens, an immense clamour arose, first among the most distant dogs and then in the home kennels, the usual accompaniment to the advent of a stranger; who, luckily, in this instance, came at a time when the more rough and savage of Mr. Hastings' four-footed favourites were, for the time being, shut up to prevent those whose services were not actually needed from attending upon him. The new comer therefore dismounted without the chance of being pulled down by angry hounds, and, throwing his rein to the man who came to receive him, and without asking for Mr. Hastings, he walked deliberately the shortest way to the gardens, in which retreat he supposed Mr. Hastings was most likely to be found.

Upon turning a corner, he came suddenly full upon the Fair Doe, to whom, with a face expressive of admiration and surprise, yet still with much grace and civility, he made a low bow, apologised for the abruptness of his appearance, and asked for Mr. Hastings. There was everything that was gentlemanlike and

respectful in his manner, and the question was put in that soft tone of voice so captivating to the female ear, especially when coming from the lips of a handsome man; and the Fair Doe could not help feeling a sort of interest, greater than she could account for, in the stranger who stood before her.

"Mr. Hastings has gone out, sir, for the day to his usual sports, or he would, I am sure, have been happy to welcome you," she said; and, as she spoke, she continued on her way through the garden, the young man still by her side.

"I had no idea," he said, "that I should find these gardens so graced. I am often here with my jovial friend; but, in general our associates are of the four-footed kind. How retired this fine old place is!"

"Yes," replied the Fair Doe, still pleased with the stranger's looks and address; "the quiet of these gardens and of the beautiful chase around it is delightful. Do you live in this country?"

"That reminds me," rejoined her companion, quickly, "that no one being here to introduce me, I must introduce myself. John Clavell, at present from my uncle, Sir William Clavell's seat of 'Smedmore,' in this shire, at your service, and ready to slay giant or dragon should either monster essay to do so fair a lady any harm. May I ask in return to whom I have the honour of addressing myself?"

"Certainly you may," replied his companion, catch-

ing from his respectful, but off-hand manner, somewhat of its tone and temper. "I am no duchess, nor countess, not even the scion of a titled house, but simply 'Miss Lorn.'"

"And whence from, or from what ilk!"

"Oh?" said the Fair Doe, with rather a melancholy smile for an instant visible in her clear, sweet eyes, "from no 'ilk,' or from *that* ilk perhaps more than from any other."

As she said this, Clavell looked at her keenly from head to foot, his face full of admiration, and, after a pause, he exclaimed,—

"It is—it must be! I have the honour of addressing one of whom I have heard much, but who is far more enchanting than even rumour had proclaimed her!" Then again taking off his hat, he exclaimed, "The Fair Doe of Fernditch! She sees her slave before her; her Knight at hand, ever proud to serve and ready at her call!"

By this time they had reached a passage in the old house which the Fair Doe knew would lead to her apartment, but when with a graceful gesture she turned to leave, Clavell took her hand to detain her.

"One serious word then here on parting!" he exclaimed. "Miss Lorn, it is the fashion in this world of ours to affirm that first impressions are but as the fitful gleam of the sun upon a cloud. I never saw you before, but though we have only passed some brief

moments together, it seems as if you were intimately woven with my wild and eventful life in some strange way, for which reason cannot by any means account. I am bound to London to-morrow, and plain common sense suggests that I may never see you again; will you grant me this favour? If any tales are told you of your humble servant which sound strange, and are even held to be beneath a 'Smedmore' shoot, but which are not mean nor cowardly, nor beneath the act of a gentleman, but simply condemned on account of their wild excesses, will you believe them? Oh, say that you will not! I am not so black as you may hear me painted; and were I in a position to fall at your feet and to ask you to save me from myself, with your consent there would be a road to heaven: alas! denied me now."

As he said the last words with the most graceful and respectful gallantry, he raised her hand to his lips, and then, with a hasty bound, as if he feared to trust himself any longer in her presence, he almost rushed out of sight.

Upon his departure the Fair Doe did not re-enter the house; she resumed her walk in a more subdued and thoughtful mood: but ere long her friends, the dogs, again began to gambol round her, and in a very short time she was at play with them, her hat off in that hot afternoon, and her beautiful hair all flowing around her.

She looked exquisitely lovely, her eyes beaming with pleasurable kindness, her cheeks slightly flushed with exertion, her graceful form now bending here, now there, as she endeavoured to catch the delighted dogs who were romping with her; if she had studied to render herself more bewitching than usual, she could not have done so, when in one of her endeavours to catch the great deer-dog Rufus, who had seized her hat and was running away with it in circles round her, she turned her head, and at an entrance from a little arbour interwoven with boughs, which gave ingress from a kitchen garden, she saw that Mr. Hastings had returned from the chase, and still and statue-like, was watching her. It seemed that the great "gaze hound" Rufus had also at that minute become aware of his master's presence, for bearing away the hat in joyous triumph, he rushed with it as a trophy for his master. The Fair Doe and all her canine playmates were alike out of breath, and if dogs could be so, they were similarly dishevelled. She, the Fair Doe, twisting up her long silken hair in haste, at once went towards Mr. Hastings, who had taken her hat from the dog, and wiping it with the sleeve of his green coat, was preparing to present it to her, but ere he did so, he took her hand and led her back to a seat, bidding his dogs to lie down, and not to teaze her any more.

While yet holding her hat, and wiping it dry from the saliva of the mouth of the dog, he asked where

Mary was, and received for reply that she was gone to her father's lodge, but might be expected back very soon.

The afternoon was lovely, the place where they sat was lonely, but lovelier still, if as lonely, was the sweet girl at Mr. Hastings' side. From the first he had immensely admired her; he was not the man to conceal his admiration, nor to attempt to curb any personal desires he might have, nor had he, king of the walk around him as he was, met with much determined opposition from wife or daughter; but now for the first time in his life, he felt at a loss what to say, or how to begin the subject that really was the chief motive of his present existence.

"You like dogs, then, my dear, do you? and I am sure they ought to like you. I stood and watched you playing with them for some time; it was a picture I could have looked on for ever!"

"Oh, yes," replied the Doe; "I love dogs. They are the most faithful creatures in the world. I once had a little dog I was so fond of; but it died, and I never *could* have another."

"Never *could* have another? What! were you so very fond of it, that you felt it impossible to love the sort of creature again; is that so, my love?"

"Oh no," replied the Doe; "it was not that, it was something very sad that thwarted my young life. I lost my father and mother, and with them all I had in

the world, save a very small pittance; and I became too poor to think of pets."

As she said this, her sweet eyes looked sadly down, and as the long lids rested on her cheek, a solitary diamond drop, a gentle girl's tear, shed really from the well-spring of the heart, pure as the first dew-drop that gems, at daybreak, the lips of the opening rose, stood out in bright relief, and dropped upon her lap.

"Ha!" exclaimed Mr. Hastings; "your parents both dead—have you neither brother nor sister?"

"No, I have neither," replied the Doe. "I am alone in the world, with none to look to, none to care for but myself; and I am going forth after this short sojourn in the beautiful Chase, rendered so needful to my health after all the trials I have undergone, and I have to earn my bread, to labour for a living."

Mr. Hastings was silent for a moment, when he rejoined with the question of, "What, my dear young friend, do you mean to do?"

"I have decided," replied the Fair Doe, "to go out as a governess in some family where there are children to be taught, or girls growing up; or, better still, if I could find such a place, I would be a companion to a lady."

"And are you accomplished enough for all this? and could you bear with the teasing stupidity of children, or the vulgar assumptions of the women you might go to, your inferiors in all but money; who would for ever

be reminding you of your dependent situation, and when *they felt* that you were more accomplished, more sensible than themselves, and more attractive even in your unobtrusiveness, they would sneer at you, and insinuate that you gave yourself airs ?"

"Yes," the Doe replied ; "I am sufficiently educated to teach and do all this, and, under Heaven, I hope I have schooled myself to bow and to bear without murmur the rod these misfortunes have let fall so heavily on me ; but there is no choice left me : where the little harvest is that I want, there I must glean, and if with the corn I garner up some thorns and thistles, I must bear the wounds to get the bread of life, and be contented."

"My dear girl," exclaimed Mr. Hastings, taking her hand, "now weigh well what you do. Born and bred a gentlewoman, accomplished and beautiful, you will, if you go out as a governess, have to face a thousand miseries you wot not of. To succumb to vulgarity, and to pass by insolence with humbleness and contempt, may be easy enough, but you will have the brothers, perhaps, of the girls you teach making love to you ; nay, the father himself of the family may do so ; and when you have turned a deaf ear to these dullards, supposing always that you have been engaged in a family, all the members in which are beneath you, the disappointed and revengeful curs may *say* that *you* had been making advances *to them*. How then will your

high, sweet soul feel at so unworthy an allegation, and in what would lie your redress? Come, come," he continued, raising her hand to his lips, "it shall not—it must not come to this. Let me snatch you from all such terrible discomfort, disaster, and aggression; give me but possession of this loved form; let me be your protector,—accept a cottage, I will make it your own; you shall be the sole mistress of it, and your friend, Mary, shall attend you, and I will come to it and see you. I love you, and do not attempt, nor do I wish, to disguise from you the fact; but mind, while you are under *this*, my roof, I am your entertainer and your slave, and you the ruling mistress; do not, dear girl, therefore be alarmed at anything I have said! You are as safe from molestation here as if under the roof of a mother; but pause and think over all I have adverted to. You have it in your own power to avoid an infinity of misery. Here comes Mary; take no notice of what has passed between us, but when you retire to the safe keeping of your own chamber, then will be the time for thought. Why, Mary," he cried, as he rose to meet her, "you are only just in time for supper. What! you have been to see Willie, have you? Come, come, don't blush; your cheeks, Mary, always tell the truth, and I must say they are the most willing witnesses I ever saw! They will out with things whether you like it or no, and need no cross-examination."

With a shout that made the garden ring again, he cried, "What ho, there! varlets!—supper! supper! supper! and don't this time forget the syrup for the sack, and the rosemary for the beer! but first to the oyster-table. These chaps from Poole," he said, holding a sort of scimitar in his hand with a napkin, to open them with, "ever whet the appetite. But you girls have no fancy for such ugly-looking things; so sit ye down at t'other table. Ha, ha! what saith the note on Gamma Gurton's Needle, by good Master Richard Clutterbuck, of King Stanley, in the shire of Gloucester, on the phrase, 'Pudding Time is Come?'"

Then, waving his oyster scimitar in the air, with a gaping fish in the other hand, and the towel across his arm, he sung or rather chanted:—

> "'Pudding time is come,
> Our last, best dish is ready,
> I pri'thee tell your serving man
> To bring it in quite steady.
> Part is made of cream,
> Part is made of flower,
> Part is made of sweet,
> Part is made of sour,
> But *my* part lies therein 'a.'

"Ha, 'ha!" and the next moment, with much celerity, the oyster was disclosed, and thence from the shell; and others, shell by shell, with great gusto, transferred to the throat of Mr. Hastings. Having thus prepared himself for supper, he joined the girls at table, and was most

amusing to both, as well as peculiarly attentive to the Fair Doe.

When supper was over, having wished them good night, he, as was his custom, wrapped himself up in his dressing-gown, kicked off his boots, put on his slippers, and indulged himself in, to him a luxurious, but as usual never an intemperate pipe.

Tobacco and "sack" in those days stirred the heart (there would have been no harm in that), but they also opened the lips, and let out secrets, as they do to this present time, when the pipe or cigar is drowned in wine or spirits-and-water; and Mr. Hastings again got into audible communication with himself. If a man always smoked in solitude or out of earshot of other people, his communion with himself, even if he talked of another, would do no harm; but in this instance, of the far-off by-gone day, Mr. Hastings *was* attended by an eavesdropper, who, from her knowledge of her master's habit, had very strong personal or jealous reasons for wishing to know, on the present occasion, the exact state of his mind. When a fog of tobacco had mystified the view, and the narcotic juice had induced a lethargic but talkative and too happy drowsiness, she stationed herself so that she could hear every word he said.

"What a lovely Doe it is!" sleepily asserted Mr. Hastings.—Puff.—"She's *too* beautiful!"—puff, puff, puff.—"I'd give the world, I'd give a forest of deer,

a river of salmon, and every hawk and gamecock I have, to call her mine; mine, to come home to after hunting, to dine and sup and—" "Wof," growled an old favourite terrier at his feet, who had just then caught sight of a figure in the door-way, not always there. "Wof, wof." "My dear old dog, what'ye woffing at?—you're dreaming," said his master, in a drowsy tone. "Be quiet. Oh! she's *too lovely*, that Doe of Does, that heavenly creature. I wonder if she understood me? I said 'a cottage,'"—puff, puff—"t'was a delicate way of suggesting that I meant a housekeeper." —Puff, puff, puff.—"A wife I never could, and can't stand *that* encumbrance; besides, I've got one in the best place of all, and that's—anywhere—but here! No, no; none of that Parson-put-logger on a free heel! 'Twould be the death of me to have two opinions under one roof, and always was; two Kings of Brantford; two cooks to one broth. My dear, don't do this; my love, you can't do that."—Puff, puff.—"Please, papa, have all your dogs tied up, or hung may be, as they frighten our lovely little one, and if she teazes them they *may* bite her. Ha! ha!"—puff, puff, puff—"No, no, I could never stand it; 'twouldn't suit me; besides, I can't. Here, as my housekeeper, worshipped and adored by me;"—puff, puff—"t'other old 'un put away—for she begins to think the house is hers, not mine—why Woodlands would be a heaven upon earth." —Puff, puff.—"How well she looked this sunny after-

noon, when, with her long silken hair all down, and the gaze hound Rufus running about with her hat; she was gamboling with all my dogs,"—puff, puff,—"the handsomest of the lot. 'Like my dog like me,'—was that it, eh, mistress? By the best buck in all the chase,"—puff, puff, puff, puff—and here he fired a royal salute, which exhausting the only pipe he permitted himself, his housekeeper hastily but noiselessly withdrew, when up started half-a-dozen terriers and spaniels, who had all the time been watching her unwonted presence, and chased her away in full cry.

"The devil's in the dogs, to-night!" cried Master Hastings, sitting bolt upright in his easy chair, empty pipe in hand. "Wheu, wheu, wheu" (his usual whistle). "There, come and lie down, and be good dogs; no noise. I would not wake from their sweet sleep the lovely eyes that are upstairs for all the worth of the king's treasury."

So saying, the master of the mansion sought his own bed.

When the two girls retired from the supper-table, and gained their own rooms, instead of going to bed they did just as young ladies do now, they sat together in one room, and held a long conversation.

Each had questions to ask of the other, for Mary had seen Mr. Hastings kiss the Fair Doe's hand, and she longed to ask if he had been, as she had termed it, "gay," while the Fair Doe, not quite comprehending

the offer of "a cottage" that had been made to her, wanted some explanation from Mary.

"Well, then, what did he mean?"

"Lor' bless me, my dear young lady!" exclaimed Mary; "he couldn't mean to offer you marriage; no, it couldn't *be* that; so, after keeping company for so short a time, what could it be? Besides, what did he mean by a cottage when he's got this grand house? Oh my! perhaps it was to *give* you one of his cottages. How nice; for then I could come and be your lady's-maid and housekeeper, and always live with you."

"No," rejoined the Fair Doe, her beautifully-rounded chin resting on her hand, in an attitude of inward contemplation. "No, no, Mary; I am sure he was thinking of something I ought not to do, and that he made me an offer that I ought at once to have met with scorn. Mary, we must leave this house to-morrow, and you return to your father's lodge. I must protect myself, as I have none other to protect me; and, after such an insult, it would ill-beseem me even to meet him again."

"What insult, my dear young mistress? What, only a kissing of your hand?"

"No, not that exactly," replied the Doe, "but when he offered me his cottage, it was because he did not think me worthy of being the mistress of his house; it was not his hand he offered me, nor even thought of offering to me. I see it all now. He made me a

proposition that no young lady could listen to, however reduced in circumstances. In short, it was nothing more nor less than that I should give up all to him, should live with him, should love him as a wife might love a husband, but without those sacred ties ordained to bind the two indissolubly together. Mary, we must leave this house to-morrow."

"Oh, my dear young lady, think what you do!" exclaimed Mary, in great consternation. "If it is an offer such as you cannot accept, just tell him so quietly, I'm sure I would; and do not, please do not, make him angry by going away. He will never forgive us if you do; and my father and all our family will lose his favour for ever. Stay, for the sake of us all, at least one more day, and then we'll make excuses to go the next day, and so get off without any bother. Do, do,—*please do*—for my sake. I would die for yours. Let him down gently, my darling young mistress, I beseech you."

The Fair Doe sat still, her face still resting on her hand, and her eyes, in sad and melancholy expression, seemed gazing beyond the present moment far away into eternity.

"Mary," she said, after a long pause, "I know *you would* do anything to serve me, and if in this instance I do what I ought not to do, and remain here over to-morrow, it is because I wish to prove to you that my affection for you is equal to yours; but, Mary, you

must promise me one thing:—if I consent to stay over to-morrow, you are not to leave Mr. Hastings and myself alone together for a moment. Will you promise me this?"

"Yes, yes, yes; a hundred times yes, my dearest young lady. I will pin myself to the hem of your garment."

"Then, on that condition, Mary, I will remain here over to-morrow; but, remember, on the next day I go to Fernditch Lodge."

Thus saying, the two friends then separated; and the deep stillness of the approaching autumn night, and the sweet sleep of youth settled on lids that, if in one instance they had been "sullied with a tear," still, like the summer rain on flowers, the full bud but the more gently inclined in its bloom to close till the break of day.

On the following morning, Mr. Hastings met his young friends at breakfast in his usual hearty, off-hand sort of way; but when the Fair Doe expressed her intention of quitting Woodlands at noon the next day, he became most earnest in his entreaties that she would remain, at least for a few days longer. So respectful to her was he in his manner, as well as sedulous in his hospitable endeavours to induce her to stay, that she hesitated in her resolution to depart, and Mary seeing this, at once made in by signs, nudges, nods, and every species of dumb show, to induce her to comply

with Mr. Hastings' prolonged invitation. Poor Mary! in her circumscribed sphere of action, and within the confines of her little world, she regarded the will of Mr. Hastings as a law, and looked on Woodlands as a palace, the roof of which conferred the highest honour on all who had the happiness of its shelter. Together, then, the kind manner of Mr. Hastings and the urgent signs of Mary won the day, and the invitation to stay was accepted, Mr. Hastings permitting no day nor hour to be named as the termination of the visit. The bluff sportsman went through his sylvan occupations as usual on that day, the girls amused themselves in his absence as best they could, and not the shadow of a thought occurred to annoy the Fair Doe, or scare her self-propriety. As to Mary, she was brilliantly happy; the only counter-remark she made, was that something had gone amiss with the housekeeper, for that she was rating the maids, and scolding the men, kicking the dogs, and cuffing the cats, morning, noon, and night, and knocking every chair and stool about as if she had a personal enmity to every kind of furniture.

Supper time came, and with it the jolly presence of their entertainer; but in the viands set before them, something seemed to have gone wrong: things were cold that ought to have been hot; the little white truncheon to keep peace between the dogs and cats was not to be found by the side of Mr. Hastings' trencher, and there was neither oyster knife nor napkin

on the table assigned to those delicious fish. Mr. Hastings for a moment forgot his propriety, and roared to his "varlets" and "bastards," "cuckolds" and "tomfools," garnishing his denunciations with an oath or two. But rage or ill-humour never lasted with him for any length of time; a rough word was the vent by which the fire of fury escaped, and he soon settled down to the hearty food before him, and to the happiness which the presence at his table of the immensely admired Fair Doe gave him.

The hour for rest had arrived, the girls had retired, and the loose sort of dressing-gown had got so far on, as to have one arm thrust into it, the customary old pipe, with a paper full of the most approved tobacco, lay gaping for use on the table; the cosy arm-chair yawned, as if for the reception of his stalwart person, when, in the midst of all this agreeable preparation, Mrs. Mantisser, the housekeeper, came well in view through the door-way whence she had, as previously described, listened to the embodied, and not sufficiently mystified, ebullitions of a too eloquent pipe.

"Well, what now?" said Hastings, as, with rather an ominous jerk, he thrust his second arm right into the sleeve of his dressing-gown, which, up to that moment, had not been effected. "What now? This here's not the time when I like to be interrupted; so keep what you've got to say till to-morrow."

"No, sir,—leastways, though willing to oblige you as

I ham, it isn't my place to keep silence out of my spear. I speaks for your good, and I won't see you imposed on, nor have my bit of nonsense put upon by a new comer."

"Your bit of nonsense! Why, cogs wounds! what does the woman mean? Whose been putting upon you? There, leave me, and I'll look into it to-morrow." So saying, Mr. Hastings sank into his easy chair, and commenced to stuff the bowl of his pipe with tobacco.

Occupied with the important office of filling his pipe, and drawing the candle nearer to him, he supposed that, obedient to his dismissal, Mrs. Mantisser had retired; but on lifting his eyes, they were astonished and angered to see the brown figure of the housekeeper, in its stout, but still not uncomely proportions, fixed and firm in the position she had at first taken.

"An't you gone, woman?" exclaimed her master.

"No, sir," replied Mrs. Mantisser, in a bitter but mincing and affected tone; "I'm not gone as you wishes I were. But I find as I have to be a going, and to make room for a new broom, tied up in gayer duds, what's begun a sweeping clean already. Eh, and it's for this as I have lost myself—it's for this as I have sewed my adorations on to a master what has no conspunctions as to preserving on 'em!" and here Mrs. Mantisser burst into tears, and rushing hysterically up to the arm-chair, threw her not inconsiderable weight into her master's lap, breaking his pipe, and with an

agonised spiteful kick of her leg, so shaking the table as to upset his customary cup of sack.

"Zounds and the devil!" roared Mr. Hastings, and up, at the unusual voice of anger at this hitherto quiet hour, sprung innumerable dogs from their nightly rest, all furiously flinging their tongues, and some, in the mad confusion of the sudden alarm, fighting with each other, because they had no strange enemy to grapple with. Up jumped Mr. Hastings, too, his stout limbs standing him in good stead, and having first shifted the brown burthen of Mrs. Mantisser, to a more convenient position, he took in his arms and carried off the considerable ins and outs of her well-confessed figure, as if they had been so much thistledown, his dogs all leaping and barking in chorus around him; when, having reached a storeroom, in the lock of which chanced to be the key, he therein deposited his housekeeper, and locked her up as if she had been a pot of so much jam. Having succeeded in this somewhat tyrannical, but, to his present comfort, very necessary purpose, he once more sought his arm chair, when, having selected, filled, and lit another pipe, and visited his cupboard cellar for some fresh sack, he very soon so surrounded himself with happy and beguiling clouds, that his usual drowsy, talkative humour returned and again he fell into the habit of thinking aloud.

"Ah, that beautiful Fair Doe," sighed the smoker. —Puff, puff.—"Damn her impudence, that old house-

keeper of mine; she's turned forty, and ought to know better. I keep a servant, not a mistress; leastways, so I will it, and she shall go! It don't do to let *that class* get the upper hand."—Puff, puff.—"I'll pension her off. She may go and prey on the human flock, not on me, and find if she can, a sky pilot, to fasten her talons on some fool for ever."—Puff, puff, puff.—As he finished this sentence, and with the last whiff of his pipe, very unlike his usual wont, which was to repair instantly to bed, he fell into a deep sleep,—deep, all save his legs, which kept kicking about with the fidgets,—and shortly after he began to dream. In the wakings of his soul there seemed to arise to his admiring glance the sweet and graceful form of the beautiful Fair Doe of Fernditch; dressed, not as usual in quaint simplicity, but in the more confessing attire of the full evening-dress of the period. Her soft and complasive voice sounded in his ears, and in her glances he read no denial to all that he desired. He took her hand and drew her to a seat beside him; it was the first time he dared to proceed so far; but with his hand he turned her half-reluctant head to his and impressed a kiss on what seemed her luscious lips, but something less sweet than he had expected, less enchanting, and ruder in its gifts, so suddenly smote upon his dreaming senses, that he awoke with a start, and found that *he* had been kissed by Mrs. Mantisser, his housekeeper; who, hearing the step of one of the female servants pass the room in

which she had been locked up, hailed her to unlock the door and set her free.

It is useless to attempt a description of the rage into which Mr. Hastings fell. From bounteous sleep of promise beautiful, from dreams of enchantment and successful and reciprocal love, he had been rudely awakened and mocked by the touch of other lips than those of which he so fondly dreamed; and now when wide awake, and in possession of his senses, he saw before him an assumption so repugnant to his present humour, that in the very agony of his anger he almost laughed. Perhaps at that moment there might have come across his mind that for this assumption which he now so thoroughly detested, there was a latent reason originated by his own conduct, and a small voice whispered in his ear that if at all times he had remembered the worth of his true position, no menial, no underling, no person inferior to him in state and station, would thus have approached familiarity.

"God's my life!" he exclaimed; "this is too bad. Get thee to thy room, woman; never venture to come into my presence unbidden again. To-morrow we will talk of this. By the dickens! you must seek some other quarters, for I'll have no more of thee."

Thus saying, in high dudgeon Mr. Hastings blew out the candles, and, seizing his own solitary light, he left Mrs. Mantisser in the dark; and, in his hurry

never wound up nor touched clock or watch, two things he always did upon relinquishing his pipe of tobacco.

The next morning found the housekeeper on another tack ; she was cool, distant, and even haughty in her manner, while, at the same time, she took care to exhibit an extreme picture of wronged sensibilities and undefinable suspicions ; and when she attended her master for instant dismissal and the settlement of accounts, she kept tossing her head and alluding to "certain parties up-stairs," without any reason for doing so, or the semblance of any party but herself being mixed up in the matter. She brought in her accounts, and begged particularly that her master would himself see that everything under her charge was duly accounted for : "Leastways," she said, "up to a certain time ; for when strangers come that ain't no better than should be, things may go conterary and what-not get missed. But, there ! them was none of her considerations now ; she only asked for what was her own, her character and her box, and be let to go away." Concluding her tirade with a gloomy assertion, "that there was those whom she had faithfully served and valued better nor she ought to have done, who'd be sorry for it after she was dead." Concluding her discourse with a faint desire "to know if," as she expressed it, "she was to be turned at large with 'the key of the street' that day, or permitted to remain till

the next, or till such time as a relative of hers came in a vehicle to fetch her?"

"Oh, stay, my good woman!" exclaimed her always kind-hearted master. "Stay to-day, to-morrow, or days, if it is for your convenience to do so, if you like; only mind,—I won't have any interference with my household. I shall give the charge of everything into the hands of my housemaid, who is a good creature, always at work, and one whom I know I can trust."

"Ugh!" grunted the housekeeper, in great disgust, as she turned to leave her master's presence; "and a pretty figure she's got, too, and well you knows it; though other folks may have as good a one for all that. But there, there, if wilful will to water, wilful must duck; so I wash my hands on it, and things must take their course." Thus saying, the deeply aggrieved Mrs. Mantisser turned away and sought the realms over which she had for many years presided, henceforth to do so no more.

It was later than usual when Mr. Hastings retired to bed, where we must, for the present, leave him, while we attend to other matters.

The scene we have thus so recently endeavoured to describe leads me to remember, and to take unto myself, the words of Moore, when in one of his melodies he sings,—

> "Wreath my brows with laurel,
> For the tale I sing has *for once* a moral."

So, profiting by the circumstances, it shall be my present endeavour to impress on the reader the excellent advice of never to lift dependants from the sphere for which they were originally designed, and never for a moment, with anyone belonging to you, to forget your position and theirs. If you do, it is sure to create rebellion in the female sex, and hatred and jealousy, and end in a forced resort to strong measures, upsetting old customs, severing long standing dependencies, and necessitating a commencement *de novo*,—all errors having to be abrogated and swept away.

On the following morning, the two girls were awakened earlier than usual by the slamming of doors, and footsteps so dwellingly suggestive of deep and angry importance as they passed their rooms, that they imagined either that something had gone much amiss, or that a stranger was in the house, whose step they had been unaccustomed to; but the matter passed off as a thing of no moment, and at the usual hour they repaired to the breakfast room, and there found Mr. Hastings in an absent as well as fidgety mood, considerably fussy and disturbed. It soon became plain to the quick perception of the Fair Doe, that there was something much amiss, and seeing this, she thought it a good opportunity to return with Mary to the keeper's lodge, and so she expressed her intention. Mr. Hastings, on being made aware of her sudden resolution, did all he could to combat it, and was only appeased in

his remonstrances by a sort of promise that the Fair Doe would repeat her visit ere she definitely left the neighbourhood.

In that era, the wardrobe, even of a young lady, was not so cumbrous as the one of the present day, so Mary had soon got all the things together, and a stout lad being assigned as their burthen bearer to the keeper's lodge, with many thanks for the kind hospitality she had received at Woodlands, the Fair Doe, in company with her affectionate but humble attendant, set out through the Chase on their way home.

As soon as they were gone, his temper not at all sweetened by the fact of their departure, Mr. Hastings turned with a methodical, stern, and close attention to his household accounts, and to a revision of the plate and other valuables that had been entrusted to his housekeeper's care. Among an infinity of sniffs, shrugs of shoulders, very audible sighs amounting to stifled groans, and tossings of the head, Mrs. Mantisser proceeded to render up her accounts, the housemaid who had been ordained for the present to succeed her, having been ordered by Mr. Hastings, in a very feverish and peculiar manner, never to leave the room during the course of these proceedings, as if he had some reason or other for dreading a *tête-à-tête*, lively in his remembrance—perhaps the unwelcome conclusion to his last night's pipe-dream. On this account, therefore, conversation, as between Mr. Hastings and Mrs.

Mantisser, was somewhat circumscribed, and things went on calmly and coldly enough, till the list of the silver spoons was read over, and one of them found wanting.

"Where *is* the spoon? Then look for it," rather snapped Mr. Hastings, addressing his housekeeper; "you ought to know. It can't have been swallowed; nor is it likely that any of my dogs or cats have run away with it, as a cow is said to have once done. They are often *charged* with thefts from the kitchen which they don't commit, but a spoon is another thing."

As the saying is, with "the left leg foremost," as if she deemed it vain to take any real trouble in the matter, Mrs. Mantisser soon gave up the search, and came and stood over the other collected property, as if she had no more to do.

"Well, but," exclaimed Mr. Hastings, "if you have done your duty, you must have seen the dozen spoons of this pattern," holding up one, "not very long since! *When* were they all right?"

"Oh, then," replied Mrs. Mantisser, tossing her head, "I know they were all right till within these last two or three days. I'm sure it's not for me to suspect anybody, nor to say nothing against nobody; but what I states upon my Bible oath is this, that, within the last two or three days at least, them dozen spoons was all right, and now one's gone."

"I'll have that spoon found!" bluntly exclaimed her

master. "I'll have every box in the house searched, but I'll find it; so you set about it and see it done."

"What done?" mincingly exclaimed Mrs. Mantisser, her head inclined a little on one side, and her hands pinching up or creasing the corners of her apron. "It's not in any box in this house: did I ever say it was? Oh, goodness, no! But there *was* boxes in the house, though I doesn't pretend to say the spoon was in 'em, as is not in the house *now*.

"What boxes, woman, do you mean?"

"There, sir, you may tear my poor body limb from limb, if it's any kind of satisfaction so to treat an old servant; but I'll never say *what* boxes—no, I scorn to take away people's characters; but there are, or leastways there have been boxes here, as were not particular in what they took. I've seen it casualty like; but, then, it's no matter what I sees: new comers is more counted on like, nor old 'uns, so I holds my tongue, saying, as I do say, that though the spoon's *not here*, it may be *there*, if not melted down nor spouted."

"Foolish woman, what d'ye mean?" angrily asked Mr. Hastings. "The only boxes that have left the house are those that are gone with the young lady and the keeper's daughter; you don't mean to say that you suspect them!"

"What I suspects I suspects, and what I sees I sees. What I says again is as I shan't say nothing; if you takes up with strangers, what not and wherefore, you

must bide the consequences of sitch acts; 'tis foolish, but then you won't believe me; so now, sir, 'tis probable as you have done a questioning me, and I may go?"

"Go, yes; go and be d——d!" roared Mr. Hastings; "but as you were last in the parlour over-night," he continued, "did you see what I did with my old silver watch? I can't find it anywhere."

"Silver—hey? watch—no!" replied Mrs. Mantisser, with a gratified start, as if she had stumbled over something very agreeable. "What's that a missing likewise? Oh! I was the last in the parlour, was I? perhaps you'll suspect me. Oh, yes; I've got your watch, no doubt—search me. There's my boxes, search 'em; tumble all my little savings out, but if you does find your watch, I says, says I, it won't be at Woodlands, but 'twill be somewhere in the Chase. There now!"

Thus saying, and in the midst of a volley of execrations from Mr. Hastings, Mrs. Mantisser glided, with a flippant air, from his presence, and ascending a cart which was waiting for her with her boxes, she was driven off on her road to Winborne, dry-sobbing, and apparently in a paroxysm of raging grief that knew no watery solace.

The silver watch of Mr. Hastings was searched for everywhere. He himself ransacked his easy chair, and shook almost to annihilation the pockets of the loose and easy dressing-gown, in which he smoked his nightly pipe, and his hunting-garments; but high and low.

pocket or no pocket, the search was vain, and with an execration on Mrs. Mantisser's head, he concluded all other remarks with an airy annunciation to himself, that the bitter extinguisher of his agreeable dream, hinted—dared to hint, that his watch and his spoon had gone away in the keeping of Mary and the Fair Doe. In spite of anger, the idea sent him into a fit of laughter.

Mr. Hastings was too much enamoured of the heroine at the keeper's lodge, to sit quietly under his bereavement. He had dismissed his housekeeper, of whom he was heartily tired, and duly installed his buxom housemaid in her place; so that all things were quiet enough at Woodlands to permit his seeking his favourite avocations. He therefore, on the day following Mrs. Mantisser's departure, mounted his horse in search of fairer game, and repaired to Ferndith Lodge, to which humble abode, however, I will take my readers by a shorter way.

The two girls, on their arrival at the lodge, did not unpack all their things till the day following their return; when, on that second day, as Mary was busy with the boxes, the Fair Doe, who was reading in the little parlour, heard her make an exclamation of surprise, and call on her young mistress "to come up-stairs and see what she had found."

On her request being complied with, on the Fair Doe's entrance, she discovered Mary on her knees by

her box, holding up to view a large silver spoon, which she said she had found among her things, and laughing at her acquisition.

"My dear child," exclaimed her young mistress, "how on earth came it there? there must be some mistake in this—what do you mean to do?"

"Do; oh do!" cried Mary, still laughing; "keep it, I suppose. No doubt Mr. Hastings intended it for me, or it would not have been put there."

"Intended a silver spoon for you!" rejoined the Fair Doe; "what induces you to think he would make you such a present?"

"Oh, because I know the gay gentleman has done such things before now—there; he put a smart waist-belt into Susan Mutcher's basket, without her knowing it, and, in the same way, gave to Sally Fairthorn a very pretty armlet. Oh, in his gay humour, he is very apt to do such things. I have not quite unpacked your box yet—let's see if anything is there!"

Thus speaking, Mary soon took out the few things the box had still contained, and with an exclamation of surprise and admiration, exclaimed—"Oh, there! I told you so. He has given you such a beautiful silver watch! Why it's large enough to make a clock for the chimney-piece of our cottage, or a warming-pan for a bed. Oh, look, look here! it don't tick; I suppose it must have stopped!"

To the surprise and consternation of the Fair Doe,

what Mary said as to the watch being there was true. She, however, viewed the matter in a far different light from that in which Mary did, and immediately expressed her resolve to return it to Woodlands. Much conversation then took place between the girls, and the conclusion arrived at was, that the watch and the spoon should be returned; the watch certainly, but as to the spoon, Mary declared that sooner than offend Mr. Hastings, if he still pressed it upon her, she would retain it as a keepsake. This having been settled, the two girls treated the whole affair as a joke. Mary placed the large silver watch in the girdle at the Fair Doe's beautiful waist, and with much comic humour, stuck the silver spoon in her own hair; and then succeeded some romping between them, and much mirth, as there was no one in the lodge but themselves, which ended in a chase after Mary down the stairs, and into the garden, when, as they came again round the corner of the lodge near the garden gate, they ran full against Mr. Hastings himself. There was no retreat, decorations and all; watch and spoon still held at the waist and in the hair their relative positions, and the Fair Doe felt as if she could have sunk into the earth. Her first attempt was to draw a light shawl over the silver watch, while Mary made the funniest demonstrations in her hair possible, putting on the appearance of a dishevelled but very pretty maniac, with the bowl of the huge spoon protruding over her forehead after the fashion of a horn.

Mr. Hastings, who had caught a glimpse, in the first instance, of both watch and spoon, stood transfixed in astonishment, unable for the moment to speak or move, his mind recurring to the inuendoes of the discarded Mrs. Mantisser.

The Fair Doe of Fernditch was the first to regain her self-possession, and to find the use of speech. "Mr. Hastings!" she exclaimed, with as much dignity as under the circumstances she could command, at the same moment taking from her beautiful waist the watch, and holding it out to him—"how I have become possessed of this, which I know to be your property, for I have seen it in your hand while enjoying your kind hospitality at Woodlands, I know not; nor how," she continued, "Mary has become possessed of that spoon, which you may see protruding from her hair. We were at play with them, childish as was the occupation, but intended returning them to you, when you so suddenly came upon us."

Mr. Hastings was silent for a few moments, while he intently regarded both these pretty girls: like many other men in this world, too much licence with inferiors had gone a great way to lower or to deprave his estimation of women in general; and because he had met with many that were careless of reputation, and willing to meet his wishes, he was too much inclined to have a bad opinion of the sex. In short, by the success attributed to him *with a certain class,* he had imagined

that all was dross, and that there was no refined gold in those mines of wealth that really and proudly exist in the delicate sensibility and faithful and all-absorbing affection of the female heart. He judged of *all* by the standard *he* had met with or set up, and knew very little, therefore, of the really graceful attributes of the Fair Doe, who thus, by circumstance, in an awkward position, offered him the watch.

For the first time in his life, perhaps, Mr. Hastings' self-possession and resolute impudence—I can find no better illustration of his usual manner to women whom he deemed accessible—deserted him, and he looked a great deal more like a culprit than either of the two confused, and in one instance, distressed girls before him. The insinuations of his discarded housekeeper flashed up in his remembrance, as did also some of the facts disclosed by the conduct of inferiors with whom he had disported in many a wasted hour; and stammering in a severe voice, its severity put on more to screen his own trepidation than to intimidate his hearers, he asked "how they came to be possessed of his property?"

"La, sir!" exclaimed Mary, before the Fair Doe had time to reply, "did you not mean us to have them? did you not give them to us? I've known you do such things before."

"Give them to you? *no!*" replied Mr. Hastings. "How came you possessed of them, and how came you

to take them away, and how to wear them as if they were your own?"

"Sir," rejoined the Fair Doe, interrupting him, her beautiful cheek flushed to her very eyes; "the watch was found by us secreted in my box, and the spoon the same in Mary's. I have told you, we treated the matter on the moment as a joke, and intended to send the things back to you. Wear them, indeed! Surely, Mr. Hastings, your experience would tell you that Mary would not have '*worn*' *a spoon* in her hair, as really an appropriate article of decoration."

Mr. Hastings pondered for a moment, and then exclaimed, "No, no, my dear young friend, I'm sure you didn't intend to take the things. Hey—what, by Jove! Now, tell me; after your things were packed-up at Woodlands, were they out of your sight for any time, —were the boxes locked?"

"No, they were not locked," replied the Fair Doe; "but they were left packed with a loose cord round them, to be tied up, and then carried downstairs for the man to take them to the lodge."

"Ah, ha," remarked Mr. Hastings, "just so; and any evil-disposed person could have secreted the property in the boxes, after you had packed them? D——n that Mrs. Mantisser—God forgive me!—and do you forgive me, too, my charming young friend, for swearing in your presence,—but that jealous old jam concoctor wanted to do you an injury. I see it all now!"

"Oh! why should she wish to do me an injury? I never hurt her. I know she is discharged; but not through me," said the Fair Doe.

"Hey—what? Discharged through you? Oh, no, of course not; but the fact is, my dear, that there are many women-folk in the world who have an innate hatred of everybody nicer and prettier than themselves, and I'm sure that old picklepot had a hand in it. There, give me my watch; 'twas given me by my mother,—I've had it a long time; and now tell me, when will you come and see me again? Woodlands seems woeful, shorn of your presence, and, my dear sweet young friend, I cannot bear to lose sight of you," then, as Mary at the moment had gone indoors, taking her hand, he added, "Come and live with me, come and take possession of my house; a dozen watches shall be yours if you will come and only express a wish to have them." At that moment Mary returned, and as she did so, her father called in from his rounds in the woods, while the Fair Doe, without deigning to reply to Mr. Hastings, drawing herself up to her full height, walked without a word into the cottage, and up into her little room.

When the Fair Doe reached her room, she flung herself into a chair, her sweet features in a phase of considerable distress. She did not weep, but with her eyes fixed on the floor at her foot, there she sat ruminating on the passage of the last few days and hours.

What Mr. Hastings intended to convey to her by his late offers, was obvious enough to her now, and filled her with intense displeasure. It showed to her best sensibilities that she must no longer abide even in his vicinity, and that, as the hard-browed difficult day must soon come, when she must go forth into the wide world to earn a living if she could, the sooner it came the better; for it simply gathered more horrors by anticipation, than perhaps it would have on real experience.

We need not, then, be present when Mary was, that evening, informed of the Fair Doe's firm resolve, or put ourselves in a position to hear and feel the sobs of poor Mary's almost broken heart; suffice it for the true interests of the tale to say, that on the very next day, in possession of very scanty funds, the Fair Doe, taking advantage of the road by any cheap conveyance she could find, was on her way to Winchester, near which her former correspondence had made her aware of a family who was in want of a governess to teach, educate, and bring up to good manners, several young children and a daughter "in her teens."

Arrived at Winchester, at the house of a respectable old lady who kept a lodging, the Fair Doe made her application in person to the family wanting a governess, and had an interview with the stout and stiffly-dressed matron at the head of it. The interview was a formal one, and the middle-aged lady seemed to examine not only the mental acquirements and propensities of the

Fair Doe's mind, but to look into and under every corner of her dress, from head to heel, and to pause with rather a frown on the least article of decoration, or at the glimpse of her pretty foot. She seemed, in fact, inclined to pull her proposed governess to pieces then and there, and on one occasion made the Fair Doe start by thrusting her rather fat fingers into her girdle, with the words, "Don't you find this, my dear, at your waist, too tight?" "No, ma'am," replied the Doe; "you see you have plenty of room for your fingers, or your hand if you wished it." So as the stout lady had actual proof of that fact, there was nothing more to be said.

The interview being over, the lady, Mrs. Starcher, dismissed her with a promise of making up her mind that evening after she had seen her husband, but with a further assurance that she thought that perhaps our heroine would do, though she would have preferred her being somewhat older, and she might have added, but she strangled the idea for the moment, "and a good deal less pretty."

Among the millions of hardships that the softer sex occasionally have to bear, and to submit to, or grapple with as best they may, is that of being too pretty.

Why should it be so? Yet so it is, that the very bounties bestowed upon many girls by the hand of the Great Creator, who chance to be poor, should be by mortals turned into facts against them; to militate

against the due and honest earning of their bread; the graces thus bestowed by heaven, instead of being encouraged to work their own fair way through life, seized upon by the leaders of their own sex as faults—to close all doors in the face of virtuous employment. While, on the other hand, those very graces which thus mar the innocent prospect of their lives, and close the best doors against them, open millions of other portals, only too charmed to make the gifts of God a leading source to utter degradation, misery, and despair.

How many instances have we seen of this? and what trials, what miseries, I have known to be the meed of nice and accomplished girls, born gentlewomen, who, by the improvidence or ill-luck of their fathers or mothers, have been forced to go forth as governesses? It has fallen to my lot, in two or three instances, to be appealed to by them, and to be asked for my advice, and I have given it with an absence of any selfish desire on my part, and simply with a view to their good; for I have ever been guided by a resolve that no man laying claim to the shadow of a chivalric feeling, should ever attempt to take advantage of an unlucky girl's position. In proof of what I say, and of the honesty of my advice, I append the following letter from a clever, pretty girl, and, keeping back her name, it is published with her own concurrence:—

"One thing there is I most particularly wish to

thank you for. Now that poor papa is dead, I see and feel your more than ordinary kindness in advising me as you have often done not to be rash, but to put up with the minor trials of life which used to trouble me at one time.

"You were *my good angel then;* by taking your advice and staying at home, I was at my post to which my duty and my love as a daughter alike called me.

"Oh, indeed, I do *now thank you* for the *gentle,* kind way you told me not to be hasty in my conclusions. If I had left papa *then*, I should have had a sorrow at my heart all my future life that nothing *could* have relieved.

"The last few days he showed me more love, more kindness, than I had received from him for months. In those last days I could have laid down my very life for him. He told me he knew he had been unkind and harsh, and asked my forgiveness; and but for you I should not have been there to have received those last dear words."

As to girls being too handsome for governesses, the following facts which happened to myself will show.

When the emancipation of the slaves in British Guiana became a settled law, and the accompanying and only benefit that was ordained with it, the "slave apprenticeship," was infamously quashed by the Whig government in power, two ladies, neighbours to my landed possessions in Berbice, each with a daughter and

without any previous communication with me, came over to England and presented themselves to my acquaintance.

Their two daughters were as beautiful as the most brilliant eyes and eyebrows, pearly teeth, and gracefully-splendid figures, and clear brunette complexions could make them; with complexions in which the rose and the lily strove to over-tint or escape through the slight sun-burn of the apricot which the climate of the West, as well as East, in their birth had given; and in every sort of accomplishment, in music, singing, and dancing, they were proficient to perfection. In French and Italian, also, they had been elaborately taught; but from their Dutch extraction, or teaching, there clung to their pronunciation a slight *patois*, which militated, so far, against success.

Before emancipation, they had learnt all these accomplishments with a view to their own private satisfaction; but when their hitherto contented labourers were let loose, and at once consigned to a too hasty and unwise freedom, with no other hands left to try to keep their estates from "the bush" than those of husbands, fathers, or brothers; these two ladies, with their graceful daughters, sought me out to get the girls established as governesses in the houses of my friends, and came to England.

They thought I had more power than I really possessed, judging me perhaps by the extent of the estates

in Guiana, by the prefix to my name, and to the fact of my representing in Parliament a division of a county; it never entered their heads that their graceful daughters, the creatures they so loved, could be "too good-looking," and they were proportionably astonished when they found that it was their beauty that stood between them and the employment they desired. The *slight patois* or Dutch pronunciation in their French and Italian might have been got over. I knew their families, and I was aware of their history, and of their standing in colonial society; so there was no halt in my power to recommend. Two of the replies I received from ladies of my acquaintance, who had an interview with my *protégées*, were as follow:—

The upshot of one was, to ask me "If I was mad to suppose that she dared have so nice and pretty a creature in her house with grown up and growing up sons?" The other was: "She is so good-looking and so nice, that I should be afraid to trust my husband."

After several endeavours to gain employment in England as governesses, on account of their beauty, was proved to be impossible, they determined to return to the colony, asking me to go back with them, to look at my ruined property, as I had never seen it, and assuring me that while there they would attend to me, and, if the climate made me ill, nurse me as their brother. Employment, position, engagements, and cost, prevented me from going with them; and by way

of keeping myself in accordance with the expressed opinion of my lady friends, I said, "I dared not trust myself in so much fascination."

They returned to the colony, and I have never seen nor heard from them again.

When Mr. Starcher came home after his wife's interview with the Fair Doe, to whom we must now assign a less sporting appellation, and designate her as "Julia Lorn," his better-half at once entered into the subject, saying that "she had seen the governess."

"Well, my dear," replied Mr. Starcher, "hope she will do, as I am told, poor thing, that she is young and good-looking, and of a good family, an orphan who has seen better days; so we can serve her and ourselves too, and this dear child as well," catching hold of a good humoured miss in her teens, his eldest daughter. "Harriet," he continued, "the new governess will make a lady of you, and teach you airs and graces."

"Oh, fie, John!" rejoined his wife; "I don't want any girls of mine to be taught 'airs and graces:' those who have graces need no airs to set them off. I should like Miss Lorn better if she was not so good-looking, and if she was not quite so attentive to the setting off her figure, which, I admit, is very good. Of course, now you know that she is pretty, you will be all for giving her a trial; it's just like your sex. So suppose I request Miss Lorn to come here to-morrow morning to agree to terms, and be introduced to her

new charge. Little Tommy is sure to set up a roar, to last all day, when he sees her; and the two younger girls, no doubt, will be afraid of her, or try to be rude and play her tricks; but, after a few days, the girl will find her level and get on very well,—at least, if she don't get practising airs and graces on our boy, when he comes home. He's just the age to think she's a princess in disguise, and fall in love with her; but, mark me, Mr. Starcher, I shall *see to that*. So now let's in to supper, and to-morrow the new governess shall come."

A nice task this, and such a one as Mr. Hastings had warned the Fair Doe against. The younger child, whose comforts she was to superintend as well as the gradual development of his mind, prepared to "roar at her all day," and his two sisters to be mischievous one way or other; the third, and eldest sister, of an age that most requires looking after; and all this to be done under the eye of a vigilant and anxious mother, sure on every question of tears to side with her belongings against the impartial rule of a hired teacher. However, the Fair Doe had made up her mind, as she thought, for all unpleasantness, and came and took up her residence with Mr. and Mrs. Starcher at Winchester.

Poor Miss Lorn, quiet, gentle, amiable, and graceful as she was, she could not but see that she was infinitely superior to the lady she lived with in all but money;

and if she had expected that she was to be received at table as one of the family, a position to which she was eminently entitled, she found herself deceived. To dine at the table of the family once or twice a week, and to come in of an evening occasionally when there were guests, to assist in the entertainment with her lute and voice, was all the attention she received; and she soon found out that the servants regarded her rather as one of themselves than as a young lady entitled to their civil attention. However, in the midst of it all her gentle temper and endurance never deserted her, and she passed by the occasional assumptions and vulgarities of Mrs. Starcher as consequences on position to be endured. She soon became great friends with the eldest girl under her charge, who was really a kind-hearted, laughter-loving creature, and who told her that she had had a previous governess whom she was very fond of, not so tall as Miss Lorn, but, if anything, younger, and who had lived with them for two years; but, at the end of that time, she was detected winking at or making signs to her papa, and offering to run away with and to marry her eldest brother; so when that was found out of course she was discharged.

"'*Winking*' at your papa!" exclaimed Miss Lorn; "and *offering* to elope with your brother! My dear child, what can you mean? How was this ever proved?"

"Oh, I don't know," said Miss Starcher; "they *said* it was proved; but I remember Susan, that was the other governess, being very indignant at the charge, and saying there was no truth in it; and do you know, let my mamma, and papa, and brother, say what they will, I do not believe she ever did any such thing. After she was gone, they found some lines written on the fly-leaf of the young governess's prayer-book which they say proved her levity and wickedness; but I think it was only her fun. You look, it's your prayer-book now, and you will see the leaf has been torn out."

"And what were the lines that they found in her prayer-book? Did you ever hear what they were?"

"Oh, yes, I can repeat them, for my brother delighted in them so much that he got them by heart, and told them to me so often that I soon learnt every word: they ran thus,—

> "'How oft on my knees in this place have I prayed
> That I might have a husband, and not die a maid;
> Grant, oh kind Heaven, in mercy most dear,
> The petition I offer so *very* sincere.'"

"Well, my dear," replied Miss Lorn, "to say the least of it, it was very foolish, time and place ill-chosen, and the theme indelicate. She must have been reckless of consequences to have written those lines in a book into which anyone might by chance have looked."

"Yes," replied Harriett; "I think she wrote them

when she knew she was going to leave, for indeed she said the treatment she had received made her reckless of what she did; and, between ourselves, I think she knew that those lines in a family prayer-book would vex mamma."

By gentleness and example, coupled with firmness, Miss Lorn strove to teach; and it was not long before little Tommy had ceased to stare at her with his large, round eyes, roar for hours, call her "ogley woman," and grew very fond of her, as did all the other children, and she found that she could bear the bore of teaching better than she expected; but still, she did not like the slights often put upon her by the lady of the house as well as the domestics, and she never felt as if she were at home. When there were guests entertained and she was asked to sing to her lute, the very great approbation she was sure to receive, from the male portion of the guests particularly, as much for her grace and beauty, or perhaps more than for her exquisite voice and tasteful execution, the success she met with was watched with a keen and venomous eye by Mrs. Starcher, very much inclined to poison the most common-place things. The female portion of the guests, those that deemed themselves accomplished in the art of music, as well as good-looking, were ill-at-ease, as if they felt themselves cut out by the "smart governess," as they delighted to designate her, though the Fair Doe ever took the greatest care, not only from her

means, but because of the unobtrusive nature of her mind, to be dressed after the simplest fashion. Even this fact of her dress was noticed in the ill-natured remark: "She thinks herself so clever and good-looking that she affects simplicity, as if she was so handsome she need not care what she put on."

Such things, such remarks as these, did not fail, by some means or other, to meet the Fair Doe's ears, and when she was aware that some envious women were coming who piqued themselves on their own powers of pleasing, she one day declined to sing on account of a passing cold; and that act, so good-naturedly intended, was at once set down as arising from affectation.

While all these *contretemps*, and many more, were going on, in the retirement of her own room she could not help thinking of the quiet lodge at Fernditch, in Cranbourne Chase, of her humble and faithful little friend, Mary, the keeper's daughter, and the bluff, hale and hearty Mr. Hastings, his mansion of Woodlands, his generous hospitality, and his ample means, and last of all, the warnings he had given her of what she would have to undergo if she sought to gain her living as a governess.

Though much that surrounded her was very unpleasant, it might have gone on for some time longer; but the arrival at home of the eldest son brought about a new phase upon the scene, to add very considerably to her difficulties.

Mr. Augustus Starcher was a clumsy, thick-set youth, of very vulgar and forward manners; he had never seen much of life, nor ever been in the society of ladies or well-bred gentlemen. He summed up his idea of the softer sex in the word "*gals*," so pronounced, and deemed that to pay them fulsome compliments was the mode of communion most in vogue, and covertly to pinch them in public, or more particularly in the presence of his mother, before whom they would be naturally desirous of not making a scene by resenting such bad taste, the way in which the gay man of the world sought to win distinction by being as he termed it a "devil among the wenches."

While thus endeavouring to describe a vulgar, plebeian young man, in or about the reign of Charles I., I regret much to say that even in the best society in the reign of George IV., I have known certainly one instance, if not more, of empty-headed coxcombs indulging in the same very low propensity in regard to pinching a young lady in a boat on the Thames, because the cowardly tom-fool built his safety on the fact that she would be afraid at the moment to resent it for the fear of making a row, or "getting up a scene." Now, if this sort of male-creature is desirous, crab-like, of pinching, why is he not to fasten his claws on the boat? Out of her timbers he would be able to get just as much satisfaction, one would think, just as much fun, as far as the pinchee was concerned, as he

would out of the pretty girl who detested his cowardly assumption. If he had an approach to good feeling, he would appeal to the timbers of the boat with this more obvious satisfaction, that at least he would annoy no one; he would inflict no pain, and the abortive mark of his fingers would not darken to so much as a spot, even if the board had been painted to assume the hue of snow, unlike the more tender surface he clutched in his crab-like occupation. I have known men, also, in the best society, afflicted with such a miserable desire to touch to no purpose things with which they had nothing and never would have anything to do, that if they could find an excuse at a dinner-table, tea-table, or card-table, to reach across a young lady who sat next them, they would take pains to pass their hand across her bosom, with a "beg your pardon" ready, if a sign of indignation should be elicited. I can only regard these kind of propensities as eminently disgusting, and as symptoms of bodily, as well as mental, decay; but at the same time, very nearly allied to the empty folly, to call it by no other name, of the "best man's" "kissing the bridesmaids at a wedding," now, thanks be to change, becoming obsolete as out of fashion. *Some* girls might not dislike to be kissed by *some* men, others might have a particular aversion to being kissed in public, or anywhere else, by *that* man; and what pleasure can it be to virile strength of muscle to seize by force on contact with a reluctant lip or cheek, with a lot of

people looking on and laughing at success or failure, while the disgusted owner of lip or cheek feels insulted as well as annoyed by so vain an assumption, so repugnant to every sentiment of delicacy. Had I at that time had room for another affection, a very pretty girl of my acquaintance certainly would have won it, when, as bridesmaid at a wedding, after vainly endeavouring to defend her lip or cheek from the assaults of "the best man," as a last resource, she hit out as straight as a line, with her pretty hand firmly clenched, and caught her assailant such a blow in the eye as effectually took the kissing-wish out of him. A raw beef-steak on externally, instead of the breakfast champagne internally, was his reward, as well as to escape, if he could, being asked on the following day "where or how he got that effectively bestowed black eye?"

But to return to the theme of Cranbourne Chase.

As I have previously described, when Master Augustus Starcher arrived upon the scene, and found in his parental domicile, as *a dependent* on his mother's bounty, a beautful young girl, he only saw a "gal," as he termed it, that is, one of the female sex in the light of a thing to be pinched, kissed, and, so to speak, courted behind every door to which chance gave him an opportunity of pulling her; so in his first introduction he commenced winking at her! At first, the Fair Doe, thinking that he had a nervous twitching of

the eye-lid, or a trick, or an infliction of an occurrence which he could not help; and soon after she was confirmed in this by finding, that when she happened to look at his father, old Mr. Starcher seemed to wink at her in the same way, and this observation led her to the conclusion that it really was a family failing handed down from father to son. One day, soon after Master Augustus' arrival, in course of conversation with her elder pupil, she asked her if her brother had not some slight affliction in one of his eyes. "La, no," replied Miss Harriet, "no more than I have. What makes you ask me?"

"Oh, nothing my dear," the Fair Doe rejoined; "I only thought that I had seen it."

"Oh! I know," cried Miss Harriet, giggling intensely; "I know: it's the way he has of what he calls 'ogling the pretty girls;' so you may take it as a compliment if he's been at it with you. I shouldn't wonder if you don't get winked at by papa too, for mamma says at times he *will* be naughty, and that before they were married he really winked at her so much that he made his eyes quite weak, and she thought he was full of grief and crying, 'stead of happy."

On finding this strange state of things, and that such vulgarism really existed, the Fair Doe made up her mind that, in the presence of such foolish men, she would never take her eyes from the ground; the consequence of this was, that whenever the father or the son

entered the room, she cast her eyes on the floor, and never once looked in their direction.

Here, then, was a handle for the jealous and sententious Mrs. Starcher. "Do you observe, my dear," she said to a maiden, or otherwise single, lady of her acquaintance, who, though far beyond a captivating age, still looked out with a sincere desire to halter a victim, and lead him up to the altar to be clerically bound; "do you observe, my dear, how Miss Lorn lets fall her eyelids when the men come in, and pretends she can't look any of them in the face? It's only just to show what long lashes she has."

"Yes, my love," replied the severely-virtuous female addressed; "now you mention it, I don't mind saying that it has often struck me! Oh, indeed, you know those long eyelashes of hers, are shown to better advantage when they rest upon her cheek. I hate such affectation, I do. Better not have eyelashes, (she never had any,) than make the gifts of heaven pander to a false passion, the passion of having all the men running after you. I detest the idea."

"Well, now, my dearest Sally, my dearest Sally Hashem, you open my eyes! How often have I seen Miss Lorn decline to sing when she was asked, particularly when the Miss Catchems were here, who, as you know, are very fond of singing. Now this was only to make the men implore her the more to sing, for it's very strange how they all run after her, and it is all

a piece of affectation like the eyes. I'll watch her, though; and if I find her at any of her pranks, out of my house she goes, and no two ways about it;" and thus these ladies parted, fully resolved to be down upon the poor, graceful, and really unoffending Fair Doe.

It was not long after the scene we have just recounted, that, as the Fair Doe was going from one room to another, young Mr. Starcher met her, and passing his arm abruptly round her waist, endeavoured to detain her, thrusting his face forward at the same time, as if for a kiss. The young man, however, reckoned without his host; strong in resolution to defend, the Fair Doe slipped from his clutches, and frankly told him that she should go to his mother for protection.

"Do," replied the graceless, cowardly cur; "and so will I, and I'll *say* you gave me encouragement."

In her indignation at the presumption of the vulgar young man, the Fair Doe scarce heard what he said, but walked straight to her mistress' room. There, with a tear starting to her eye, which the rudeness of young Mr. Starcher had failed at first to elicit, she asked Mrs. Starcher's protection from further rudeness, stating that "her son had interrupted her in her passage through the rooms."

"Oh dear! what did the poor boy do?" demanded Mrs. Starcher, in a bitter, mincing tone of voice; "something dreadful, I dare say. Did he kiss you?"

"No," replied the Fair Doe; "I ask only to be pro-

tected from further personal molestation. He laid his hands on me, and tried to detain me; and from a repetition of the insult I ask your protection, and trust you will extend it to me while beneath your roof."

"Well, I will speak to my son," replied Mrs. Starcher, "and hear what he says in the matter. I dare say it is not so bad as you represent it; but there, he shan't do it again."

On this assurance, the poor Doe retired to her room, very evidently foreseeing that ere long she would again be thrown on the wide world to seek a daily maintenance, and when at night, those beautifully long silken eyelashes of hers rested on her cheek, the tears of her lonely, unshared-in sorrow came through them for a minute, hung on them, and then, as the rain from the weeping willow leaf, trickled down to still, if they could, the sobbing rise and fall of her snowy bosom.

What took place the next day between mother and son, or between father, mother, and son, we do not know; but on Mrs. Starcher's sending for the Fair Doe, the latter found that respectable dame in a sententious sort of reproving phrensy, her mind fully determined on reading to her governess a lesson, showing that her son was in no way to blame.

"Well, Miss Lorn," she said, "I have only a very few words to address to you on this matter. If young women don't want followers, they should not fling out lures. I have spoken to my good man, Mr. Starcher,

and he fully agrees with me. Take the advice of myself, a woman far your senior, and don't make so much use of your eyes,—it don't become a girl in your situation. There, I have said my say, so now, good morning."

The poor Doe retired to her room, and on reviewing the circumstances, fully perceived that she could not hope to retain her present situation, with any approach to comfort or advantage to herself; for it was evident that the lady under whose protection she was, or ought to have been, would listen to but one side of the question, while the aggressors, as against her, were utterly unscrupulous in their hints and innuendos, and would be sure, in defending themselves, to cast all blame upon her. She determined, therefore, to quit her present situation.

While wavering on the point as to when to go, and what to do, to obtain even a bare existence, the occurrence of the next evening put the question out of doubt.

Mrs. Starcher had "company," as she called it, after dinner, and a good many of her acquaintances dropped in. Dinners were earlier in those days than they are now, but at whatever hour her party had been asked for, her friends had assembled to the full extent of her room; and between the songs there was a hub-bub of conversation. All this time Mrs. Starcher's eyes had been fixed on her pretty governess, during her singing, for

she sung that evening, and on her husband, and on her son, by the advice of the middle-aged spinster, Sally Hashem, in order to see "what charms, what mighty magic," for so she had been "charged withal," she tried to win their notice.

A duet had been sung by the Miss Catchems, and after a hum of general approbation, there was a sudden lull in conversation, when the portly figure of Mrs. Starcher was seen to rise and deliberately walk across the room, and suddenly subside in a half sedentary position into the midst of the stomach and bosom, for her seat comprehended both, of her liege lord, Mr. Starcher, who was lounging, or rather lying, in a very copious arm-chair, with the back of his head against the bottom of the back of the chair, where it sprang from the seat, his whole body on the seat, and his legs, from his hips, stretching out into the room.

There is nothing very remarkable in a stout lady's sitting in her own conjugal lap, when any approach to endearment induces it; but for a stout lady, in a crowded room, to do so, àpropos to nothing, and as if in a desire to crush the recipient of her charms to dust, is quite another thing. Her manner, the apoplectic black-red hue of her angry face, and the weighty impetus of her subsidure, silenced every sound and brought all eyes upon her. She had caught her husband in the act of winking at her pretty governess, and kissing the tip of one of his fingers slily towards her. Of course at

the moment no one but herself knew this; all the assembly saw was, that she had sunk down on her husband, and that all that could be seen of him was his convulsed legs, and his speechless face and protruding tongue, looking as if it came out of Mrs. Starcher's left-hand pocket. That there was a fit between them, or on one of them, was the only solution of the scene.

Everybody crowded round; the severe Sally Hashem raised Mrs. Starcher from the body of her husband, while the latter individual, much flattened, rose to his legs and was seized by a lengthened fit of coughing. Mrs. Starcher was conducted, in a species of hysterical fit, from the room; everybody saw that something or everything was wrong; the poor dear Doe of Fernditch hastened off to her own room, and in an incredibly short space of time, as a wit of Winchester facetiously described it, every one had mizzled, and the internal harmony of the home circle was left to the enjoyment of its own attractions.

"What's in a name?" is an oft-asked question. "What there is in a wink," I have endeavoured to show: it hastened the resolve of our pretty heroine, and threw her very shortly on the wide, wide world, where to choose a place to rest her head.

It was a wide and dreary prospect then that opened out before the Fair Doe of Fernditch. A limitless world when viewed from her position, without one safe

resting-place or harbour on which she could rely to shelter her from those vicissitudes that are sure to beset the beautiful and unprotected girl, when seeking, by her own personal, honest industry, to earn the bread of life. The hospitable house at Woodlands, and its hearty proprietor rose before her, his offer to protect and provide her with a house of her own, came out in full and bright relief on the darkened canvas of the picture, and her humble but faithful little friend, Mary, the keeper's daughter, seemed to stand by that proffered house and to beckon her self-selected and dearly-loved young mistress to enter and assume its rule. Even the graceful deer-hound, Rufus, that had played with her hat, came again upon the visionary scene, and every circumstance of the few happy hours she had passed at Fernditch Lodge in Cranbourne Chase and at Woodlands rose to her view, as the dreams of home rise to the young mind when first at a public school. Where else could she be so safe or happy as in the lodge of Mary's father? Where could she meet with so much attention and protection as in the vicinity of Mr. Hastings, whose admiration for her, by this time, might have sobered down even to a sort of parental affection. On one side she saw a wide, an uncertain, a dark and friendless world; on the other, at least a gleam of light, that lifted her heart and lured her on to a scene of friendliness and rest; and we must not wonder, therefore, that she resolved to leave Winchester, and once

more to visit Cranbourne Chase, there to remain till she could meet with further employment. With this end in view, much to the tearful regret of her pupils, Miss Lorn, more familiarly known to us as the Fair Doe of Fernditch, gave Mrs. Starcher due warning, and began to inquire the best and cheapest method by which to reach the Chase. To say that she did not remember her casual acquaintance with young Master John Clavell would not be right: she often thought of him, but only as one she certainly admired, but on whom she might probably never set eyes again.

In the days of which I am speaking, transit by the roads was far different from what it is now, and those who could not afford to jog slowly along in their own cumbrous vehicles, or to ride the journey on horseback throughout, were obliged to put up with rough conveyance and rougher lodgings. Travelling was much more costly than it is now. The Fair Doe, then, found herself in the first dreary wet weather of a hard winter, in the month of December, in a tilted cart, the driver and owner of which was known to the good-hearted lodging-house keeper at Winchester, to whom the Fair Doe, in the first instance, had had a letter of introduction. Ere she set out on her journey, she despatched a letter to Mary to tell her of her approach, and then committing herself to the humble and uncomfortable conveyance, she proceeded by bad roads, over downs, and through forest, through "purlieus," and through chase,

for the whole country through which she had to pass was of that description, and after much deviation and delay, found herself at the gates of Mottisfont Abbey.

The day when she looked on this goodly pile was a bright one. The fields round the abbey were not the beautiful smooth lawns that they are now, kept in the perfection of neatness, nor did the pellucid and trout-haunted "Test" glide in its present even banks and kiss the forget-me-nots that at this day scarce stoop from the emerald turf to meet its wave; but still the features of the landscape were graceful, and the old trees, then as now, loved the luxurious soil so much that their arms stretched down to the turf beneath their stems, as if desirous of catching a firmer hold than even their roots gave them, by which to resist that enemy of all, the greedy tyrant, Time. Of all the graceful places I have ever seen, I know none that have made so much impression on me as did Mottisfont Abbey, in the year 1867. Outside and in, the place seemed similarly cared for, and in those old cloisters on the lawn there, dark even in noonday, flitted the descendants of those same little creatures who had seen the crosier and the cross lifted by monkish hands high in the face of day. I paused beneath those sombre arches in their twilight of centuries' duration, and longed to see some old servitor of the bygone time come forth from the walls to answer my questions,—the only other presence I would have tolerated in that happy hour!

Long may the present owner of this beautiful place live to enjoy her graceful possession. If good wishes could avail, she would never know a frown nor the passage of a saddened hour. But to resume the thread of my discourse, that leads to the fate of the Fair Doe.

Her travels, never direct,—her visit to Mottisfont was a deviation,—brought her at last to a change of conveyance and to Salisbury Plain, in crossing which she had been consigned to a better sort of carriage, and to a better class of fellow-passengers. The pace of this conveyance at starting was slow enough, but, by degrees, it became slower still; and though fresh horses were put to it, from some hovel here and there, when the Plain had nearly been passed, and she was approaching the then purlieus of her longed-for Cranbourne Chase, a drifting north-east wind, with snow and sleet, came on, and darkness began to set in, in all the horrors of a stormy December night. To the repeated, and anxious, and angry requests of the male passengers, "if the driver could not get on a little faster," no response had been elicited save by sundry blows and expletives to the jaded horses. When on finding that, on so dreary a site, so lonely, and of such evil repute as to various robberies, they were about to travel at a foot pace, the Fair Doe became aware that all her travelling companions were making strange purses of their boots and shoes, and hiding their money in all sorts of conceivable places, recommending her to

do the same, particularly so as to a gold chain round her neck. The poor Doe took little heed of their advice, for she thought that if a highwayman did come, he had better see and take what he chose than guess that there was much concealed and search for it with a rude and ruthless hand. One man, or one "inside," as it would be called, produced a pistol; but his hand was so tremulous, and his apprehensions so great, that those who were with him became fully aware that every minute they ran the risk of an accidental death through the tremulous state of their belligerent companion.

The snow had fallen thick, and the tardy rumble of the wheels had gradually grown dim, when suddenly a harsh voice sounded loud at the heads of the horses, and a command to stop rang through the carriage. In an agony of desperation, the armed passenger fired at random through the window, and a loud voice cried out, "No more of that, or you are all dead men. No harm at present; be quiet, and pull out your purses to deliver."

Whether the two men who had care of the cumbrous sort of coach had arms or not—they ought to have had —at the minute was not known. There certainly was some show of resistance, for a heavy blow or two passed, and a voice, not altogether that of a low ruffian, spoke in a tone of authority to quell resistance, and the same voice threatened to repeat the blow, and to blow out brains; then the leader, for such the owner of the voice seemed to be, rode up to the window and ordered

all the male passengers inside and out to alight and render up what valuables and money they possessed.

"Not the women," he exclaimed; "they must not come into the snow,—we'll have a light for them. Now, gentlemen, all in line hand out."

Out there came such a row of almost empty purses, that the highwayman and his companions, for he had three, laughed, and the leader exclaimed,—

"Money seems scarce with you, my friends, to-night; but I daresay we can find it. Here, George, show the light; make these gentlemen off with their boots and shoes, tear out the lining of their hats, and grab their duds all over to see if there is anything hard in the stuffing. I'll attend to the ladies. Here, the light for the ladies first; but see you shoot the man that offers to stir."

Saying this, the leader, having dismounted, with his face masked, approached the door of the vehicle, opened it, and threw the light by chance at once upon the pallid and terrified face of the Fair Doe. At that instant, as the sheltered orbs of the black mask fixed on the Fair Doe's features, the lantern fell as if stricken by some shock to the ground, the door was slammed together, and the voice of the leader again assumed its roughest tone as he ordered all the passengers to be set free, and such purses or property as had been rendered up to be returned to the respective owners.

This unwonted command received anything but favour

from the other highwaymen, and they were inclined to disobey; one of them saying, he had seen the gold chain on the neck of the Fair Doe, and at least he would have that. "If you offer to put a hand again on the carriage door I'll blow your brains out on the spot!" exclaimed the rough and evidently feigned voice. "I *will* be obeyed; and my whim is that all these passengers shall escape us free. Coachman or driver, mount your seat; gentlemen, get in or out, which you will—not a hair of your heads shall be hurt, nor a farthing taken from you, and God speed you on your way."

Now, with that keen perception of her sex, the Fair Doe could not help thinking that, somewhere or other, she had heard that highwayman's voice before, and she felt sure of this in his utterance of the last words, when some hidden emotion seemed to naturalise or neutralise the artificial tone he had evidently assumed for the purposes of concealment. She thought of this, and trusted to perform the remainder of her journey in safety; but she was yet doomed to severer trials.

The tired horses in the cumbrous vehicle in which she was hobbled along at a very slow pace, at times walking, seldom trotting, and often standing still, so that the night appeared to have no termination. At last weariness overcame all anxiety, and she fell asleep. From this she was suddenly awakened by loud voices, intermingled with the sound of blows, when, before she could realise in her own mind what was happening, the

door of the carriage was roughly wrenched open, and one of her female companions dragged forth into the snow. "Here," cried a loud, undisguised voice, "come on, my mates, there's two more of the sex inside; they shall pay with their lips as well as purses, and we'll have a spree."

All then became confusion; the male passengers, inside and out, again resisted; the women screamed, when, in the pitchy darkness and confusion, the Fair Doe opened the door next to her, and, like a wild deer, jumped out into the deep darkness of night, flying for her life she knew not whither, and terrified at the threats of violence which she had heard. At first she imagined that she should have to run along some road, with a fence on either side, into the ditch of which she might crouch for safety; but this was not so; they were on an open track, and she sped over the wet ruts and dark lands, now melted of their snow, and sloppy from a cold drizzling thaw that had set in, without hindrance. She knew not whither she flew, and she did not care where, so that she could be safe from, to her, the most horrible fate, the brutal and personal violence of low-bred villains. Terror for a while gave speed and strength to her footsteps, and breath to sustain her in her flight; but now, reeling, fainting on the way, she sank upon the ground, and for a time became insensible. How long she continued thus she knew not; but consciousness at length returned, with a dreadful sensation of numbness and cold, amounting, in her terror-stricken

mind, almost to the approach of death. Her small and pretty hands had hardly any feeling; yet, in stretching out her arm to ascertain the nature of the things that might be near her, she found that she was lying beneath an oak tree, and on a sort of bank at its root which raised her slightly from the more humid surface that surrounded her.* Her eyes, now suffused with rain and tears of horror and despair, looked forth and peered as well as they were able into the black darkness that surrounded her, in the hope of seeing a light, and her ear at the same time was acutely on the alert for any sound that might break the dread stillness of that lonely hour; but no sound of any sort could be heard, save that she thought a stick cracked very near her, as if broken by the foot of some passing weight. Intently listening again for any sound, she became aware of the sheen of two intensely bright eyes very near to her side, as if some animal was gazing at her in dubious guise whether to come on or to retreat. Apparently the creature, whatever it was, became assured; for, after making a circle round her, the glare of the eyes, only to be seen when gazing at her, it at once advanced; a cold, wet something touched her cheek, a warm tongue kissed it, and a large rough dog laid himself down upon her, and

* The remnant of this tree, with a hole through the centre of its trunk, may still be seen to the left of the lane approaching Woodlands, near a little common. It now stands on the bank of a hedgerow.

stretching out his long neck, so as to press it against her breast, seemed anxious not only to guard her, but to protect her from the cold. Chilled as she was, almost to the extinction of life, the rough coat and warmth of her large four-footed friend was of immense service to her, and she patted the dog with her poor benumbed hand, and for every caress she gave she could hear the grateful tail beat happily on her dress and on the ground. As she lay thus half dead, yet clinging to hope and warmth, a faint streak in the eastern sky betokened the approach of morn, and more cheeringly still, the crowing of a cock not very far off met her ears, and she wondered where she was. As the dawn advanced, she looked at the faithful creature that still lay licking her wet dress and trying to shield her from the cold, and with almost a scream of joy and surprise she saw and recognised Rufus, the large "gaze" or deer-hound who held her hat in his mouth when Mr. Hastings surprised her at Woodlands when playing with his dogs in the garden. Then she *was* near help, near her friend Mary and near Mr. Hastings! Her joy to some degree lessened, for a whisper in her conscience told her that it would be dangerous, in her forlorn and helpless state, to put herself in the power or at the mercy of a man who had already shown her what were his desires.

How often do we see the weaker sex blamed for some false step into which they are forced by circum-

stances! When the blessings of the world, of this life, when Heaven itself seems to have left or deserted them, when almost mere existence is at stake, what wonder if the ear inclines to offers dressed up—gilded in eloquently pleading and pleasing words, and backed by the proffered comforts of establishment and wealth. Yet there are those that should be of the softer sex in this world, never having been assailed nor tempted by poverty or passion, circumstance or misery, who show no mercy to an "erring sister," and "never droop the wing o'er those that die," passing over the beautiful wreck, if with a feeling akin to commiseration, still with no more than a shrug of lamentable indifference.

The Fair Doe of Fernditch recognised the faithful hound she had played with in happier hours. She remembered the warm and comfortable mansion of Mr. Hastings, his offers, and her humble but sincere friend the keeper's daughter at the lodge; she remembered all these things, and then the miseries of serving as a governess those vulgar people who were really a hundredfold her inferiors in all but money. These reminiscences did not tend to strengthen her aversion to Woodlands, nor did they in any way fortify her against that longing for warmth and protection from the bitter cold around her, nor from wishing to hear the gentle tones of entreaty instead of the harsh word of command, and so to speak she caressed Mr. Hastings when she caressed his dog.

Numbed, cold, comfortless, and ill, she essayed to rise, when the moment he was aware of the action the dog leaped to his feet and sprung a short distance on the road towards his home, and then stopped to see if she followed. But no, she could not rise, and a wretched sensation came over her that, unless assistance came, she must die upon the spot.

But hark! the approaching hoofs of a horse. She lifts a hand in the air as the sound seems to pass her closely by; the signal is seen by the rider, and on his haunches stops the horse: the horseman springs to the ground, and the great deer-dog to her side, who with bristles erect, his holders shown, with deep growls warns the suspected enemy away.

In an instant she hears her name, "By my soul, the Fair Doe of Fernditch!" and dim and failing as her sight was, she recognises Master John Clavell, whom she had met at Woodlands. Clavell seemed to have his arms about him, for on the first show of enmity exhibited by the dog he had drawn a pistol from his belt; but now pausing, he exclaimed, "Quiet your four-footed friend—he does not know me,—and then all aid that I can make is yours."

The sagacious dog soon discovered that in the arrival of the horseman no violence was intended, but that aid had come, when, though narrowly watching all that was done, the noble hound permitted Clavell unmolested to take from his shoulders his horseman's cloak and to

wrap it round the Fair Doe; this done, with an assurance of returning with immediate relief, Clavell remounted and galloped off in the direction of Woodlands.

By the time that Clavell returned with assistance and a litter, the Fair Doe had become utterly unconscious: her heart still beat, but to all sensation, sight, or sound, she was as dead as if the spark of life had flown, and might have died but for the warmth the dog afforded.

To Woodlands then they bore her, where we must leave her for a time.

For days the Fair Doe of Fernditch lay in a sort of trance; and for a long time it was doubted by the medical man who attended her, whether the system so chilled and shaken would have power to rally or not.

One night, however, the poor sufferer had mental strength enough to dream, when in one of those starts or restlessness of limb, which so often tend on restlessness of mind, the force of muscular action awakened her, and she opened her eyes in re-aroused consciousness, and looked around her.

She was in a good-sized, most comfortable chamber, with a cheerful fire burning on the dogs, as the irons for support of the burning fuel were called; stretched on the hearth lay a large rough deer greyhound, and around her on the tables there seemed to be arranged, with the most scrupulous cleanliness and care, every restorative and comfort then most in vogue. It was

daylight, and she looked at the diamond panes in the window; they for the most part were silvered over with hoar frost, and when the bare boughs of a tree intervened between her and the rising bright but deep red sun, frosted as the twigs were, on them sat a merry flock of sparrows, the feathers on their breasts bluffed out, as if they had donned warm winter spencers to shield them from the biting blast. They seemed to turn their little sharp black eyes to the window-sill, as though in expectation that the Fair Doe would rise and give them crumbs. Mary had been feeding them, because she thought it would amuse the Fair Doe when well enough to do the same. On the other side of this apartment there stood a rather large screen: it might have been there to keep some draught away; it certainly was not there to shield the fire. The slight rustle made by the pillow beneath the cheek of the Fair Doe, called forth a louder one behind the screen, and a noise as of two feet upon the floor, and then came an anxious beaming pretty face from behind the screen, and then the form of the keeper's daughter, Mary, who hastened up and knelt beside the sufferer's bed.

The joy, the delight of that devoted attendant was beyond the power of description, when she saw the Doe's mild eyes recognise her, and her lips move as if she wished them kissed. It is enough to say that the friends were again together, beneath Mr. Hastings' hospitable roof; the Fair Doe sheltered and safe from

every earthly assault that foes confessedly could make for her, and subject only to Heaven's and her own guidance, for the future, to keep clear of those hidden rocks which so often wreck the craft, that, tempted by the smooth water lulled by weeds to quietude, venture under misbelief, too near. Each motion made by the face or fair arms of the Doe, drew Mary over and over again to her bedside, and produced on the hearth before the fire about a dozen knocks from the stern, or tail, of the great deer-dog, who never failed to wag his congratulation at the progress to recovery of one for whom he had acted an important part, and been so instrumental in saving.

Care and affection, comfort and skill, soon brought nature round, and the Fair Doe's recovery was no longer doubtful. In his inquiries as to her health, Mr. Hastings was constant, and he had given Mary orders to ask for anything his house or his means afforded, warming up that poor girl's heart in all its awe and veneration for him, and making her constantly assure her young mistress that if there was a kind, noble gentleman in the world, it was his Honour, Master Hastings. With returning strength also came back the blither tone of the recovering mind, and when Mary, seated by the bedside, was loudest in the praises of Mr. Hastings, her young mistress would sometimes rather archly ask if Mary thought Mr. Hastings was still a "gay man." To this Mary would reply, "He's

nothing but a green angel in hunting clothes," an assertion against which nothing could be urged.

After some further time, when the Fair Doe was well enough to leave her bed, and be dressed and sit up, Mr. Hastings craved an interview, and was at once admitted, Mary very discreetly taking the opportunity to go out at the door when Mr. Hastings came in, without having said a word as to this to her young mistress. Then was there something very different in Mr. Hastings' manner towards her than in those days when she was well and happy. He took a seat at her side, and took her hand without raising it to his lips, and spoke so kindly, so tenderly to her, without a symptom of presumption of any kind, that that one interview, the first after her arrival at his house, did more to set her mind at rest, and to render her comfortable and trustful, than if he had talked to her for years. She saw, or she thought she saw in him *now*, no suitor, but a kind-hearted, high-souled gentleman, disinterested, unselfish, open-minded, and charitable in the extreme.

Day by day the Fair Doe improved in health, as Mary assured her. "Oh! my dear young lady, your shadow gets bigger every hour; you don't want tightening now, you've tightened in your things, so it's all right; and I long for primrose time to come that we may go out in the Chase together."

One day, as they were walking in the walled garden,

in the most sunned and sheltered place they could select, the approach of some person strange to the canine watchmen was discovered by a distant and then nearer chorus from innumerable dogs. Not long after this, Mr. Hastings being out in his accustomed sports, a foot was heard approaching the garden, and young Master John Clavell stood before them. His bearing had lost that easy character that it possessed when the Fair Doe had last seen him on that spot, and his manner, as well as the method of his bow, was more constrained and diffident; nevertheless, he became rather better assured and at his ease when the Fair Doe advanced to meet him, her sweet face alive with feelings of gratitude.

"It makes me very happy to see you, Master Clavell. As my joint deliverer, you will not be angry with me for coupling you with *this* faithful creature," at the same time patting the head of the deerhound, who never left her; "for you know the service he was to me."

"I do indeed, madam," replied Clavell; "and to be but second to a noble creature like that in your service is of far more worth to me than it would have been to be the first with any other. May I crave a few words (looking at Mary) with you alone?"

"Mary, you may return to the house, and I will follow you in a few moments;" then, turning to Clavell, she said, "there is scarce anything that my deliverer could ask in reason that I would not willingly grant."

Young Clavell stopped dead at these words, and turning his handsome, care-worn, anxious face upon the Fair Doe, essayed to speak, but words would not come. His lip quivered, and his eyes glistened as if with a checked tear, but not a syllable could he utter; it was quite evident that he longed to speak, but either could not or dared not yet do so.

The Fair Doe saw his distress, and took his hand. "I see," she said, "you have something to impart that is of consequence either to yourself or to me; compose yourself, and remember that I am so much your debtor that when you speak to me it is as if you held commune with yourself. I either rule myself to make such use as you permit me of what you say, or I bury all you tell me in oblivion."

"Thanks, thanks, my dearest, kindest friend; I am myself again now, and mean to utter not a word to vex you in any way, not a word, save to implore your forgiveness and pity. You will remember that here, in this garden, at our first interview, I asked you that, whatever you might hear against me, you would not believe me as black as I was painted; for that indeed I had redeeming qualities that were but submerged for a time by danger and difficulty, alas! in one sense, of my own making. That was the upshot of what I wished to impress upon you. Wild companions, older than myself, among whom I was thrown at a very early age, set me a very bad example, and bound me

up in a wager, and then hampered me with debts of honour, as they are called, which I had not the means to pay, unless by winning the unlawful prize that the fiend himself suggested. In short, the only method I had of winning the heavy wager, the success in which would pay my debts of honour, was—was to commit a certain number of robberies on the highway—"

The Fair Doe dropped his hand as if it really had been a hot coal.

"Hear me out," he cried, "and do not yet so hopelessly condemn me. The last robbery within the wager was—was that in which I failed, for you were in that carriage."

"I thought so!" exclaimed the Fair Doe. "I felt assured your voice and figure, however disguised, were known to me. But go on."

"You know the rest. The moment I saw you I felt, or seemed to feel, the presence of a good angel, the antidote to all evil passions, and for your sake I spared all who were with you, and saw you depart in safety; and then, debts or no debts, some better feeling mastered my being, and I resolved rather to lose the wager, and fail in the payment of my debts, and to fight, though to the death, the insults my needy companions would be sure to heap upon me. Setting spurs to my horse, I rode from that spot where the robbery was intended, but not till after I had thought that the conveyance that held you was beyond the

reach of the rough footpads that had been under my orders. From the tired state of your horses or through their making more speed than I expected, they overtook your carriage, and committed the outrage; but, in doing so, again made me of service in rescuing your life from the hardships of that terrible night."

He paused and looked at her for a moment, and then resumed,—

"It is a strange moment this for me to plead to the heart of a gentle girl for even more than my life, and time flies, with the avenger behind me too; for intelligence has come that one of the villains who had been in my unworthy service, and who eventually stopped your carriage and robbed your fellow travellers, has turned evidence against me, and I am known as a highwayman. I shall suffer, and I ought to suffer. If with my life, let these last words of mine at least be listened to by a forgiving angel upon earth. There is but one being in the land of the living for whom I care, for whom I feel that it is within me to become a better man, and for whom I cherish an affection that in its pride and power knows no halting-place and no decay. It broke on me here in all its saving sunlight and beauty when I first saw you. Had our meeting been but a month earlier, you would have found a spotless gentleman at your feet, to have refused if you selected to do so, instead of having perhaps to discard

from your presence a convicted felon—a man who *could* in his heart do so, but who cannot, in his present unhappy position, hold up his head among his compeers in rank and in society. I have then one favour, one blessing, to ask to cheer my perhaps transient existence—my life as long as it may last—to have the light of that favour, if granted, to cling to and to show me the path to a happier world. My worship of you you already know. If God in His goodness should spare me, and after any punishment that the law can assign me, if I return once more to the accorded affection of my family, and forgiven by the world, will you then listen to my love; and till that opportunity to hear me arrives, let me live, live yet to deserve your love, and to face the dreadful desolation that now oppresses me? Steps are approaching—we are interrupted—my sweet, my saving angel, *yes* or *no?*"

All this time the Fair Doe had listened to him in silence, occasionally setting her beautiful eyes on his handsome face, as if to search the very recesses of his soul. As he concluded, her graceful figure swayed a little to and fro with emotion, her eyes fell on the ground, and she answered, "*Yes.*" He seized her hand and pressed it to his lips, and then turned hastily away to meet the approaching step that had been heard, when Mr. Hastings himself, his generally kind face clouded with a frown, and holding a small parchment in his hand, met him at the door. As Mr.

Hastings came into the garden at one door, the Fair Doe entered the house at another, and Hastings and Clavell were left together.

"How now, Master John Clavell, strange that you should present yourself at my house—the house of a justice, with a Queen's warrant at your heels affecting your liberty and life! The officers are at the gates, and I passed my word that you were here and would not try to escape. What it all means, you alone can tell; but as yet I think so well of you that you will at once obey the warrant, and face what I hope is an unfounded charge."

Poor John Clavell stood like one bewildered as well as crushed by the circumstances around him, and, for a moment, knew not what to say; at last, however, he told Mr. Hastings everything, the substance of which the reader has already heard, declared his willingness to obey the warrant, and, having delivered himself up to the "thief-takers," he was removed from Woodlands and taken straight to the Tower.

The day following the arrest of John Clavell being Sunday, Mr. Hastings was at home the greater part of the day, and in the afternoon he was sitting in his parlour with his graceful guest. There was no hesitation on her part now as to being left alone with him; so great had been his kindness to her that she thought she never could show him sufficient attention for it, and the more so because of late he had adopted to-

wards her a paternal line of conduct, rather than that of a suitor, and treated her as if she was his daughter.

"Well, my dear Julia," Mr. Hastings said, when they were seated together, "this is a sad thing, this charge against John Clavell, and it certainly will affect his liberty, if not his life. Poor young fellow, he has been led into this scrape; and, after all, he is but a degree worse than Lord Castlehaven, Lord Molineux, Sir William Harsham, Masters Sturt, Good, Chafin, Harbin, and lots more: for while *he* cut purses, *they* steal other people's things when they kill the deer; and whether you take from Lords Ashley, Salisbury, Pembroke, or Lord Rivers, their deer or their money does not much differ, both money and deer are their private property, and the cut-purse and the cut-throat are cousins certainly in crime. There is more pluck, too, in robbing men who *can* defend themselves than there is in killing and stealing a poor defenceless deer; so, hang me, but I think John Clavell is no worse than the rest."

"Poor fellow," replied Julia Lorn, "can nothing be done for him? can no intercession be made to our gracious ruler in his favour. I feel as if I was the cause of his present captivity; for if I had not been with the travellers whom he stopped, that one escapade of his was to have been the last, and there would have been an end to the lamentable wager, and he would have been free of all his difficulties. I owe my safety and my life to him, for had he not found me on that

dreadful night, I never should have reached your house alive, nor had to thank you for that generous care and hospitality which has restored me to health, and to happiness. Oh! could we not clear Master Clavell in this terrible strait?"

"Then you *do* feel a deep interest in him, eh! my Fair Doe, is that so? I fancied something of this before. Come, tell me—I'll be your father confessor—is there love between you and him?"

"I will disguise nothing from you, my dear benefactor," replied the Fair Doe; "it would be wrong and ungrateful if I did. How can I but like or love the man, who, for my sake, brought all his present difficulty on his head, and saved my life? I do love him, and I have as much as told him so."

"Humph! been quick about it," said Mr. Hastings, partly to himself; and then again addressing her, he asked, "Then I suppose you are both of the same mind; and you have parted with the poor lad under an assurance that you will be true to him whatever his fate may be, and be the sun of his existence to look through the prison bars, and to give him light and hope?"

"I have not told him *so much* as that, my dear benefactor; but I have promised to return his affection, and faithfully to await the issue of events."

"Very well, my dear girl, that is all as it should be. He is a high-spirited young gallant, and good-looking. Of a good family, too, in this our shire of Dorchester;

and now, Julia, listen to me. I'm going to have my way with you, and I'll take no refusal, since you admit that I have done so much for you. Promise me, then, if but out of the gratitude you say you feel, to refuse me nothing."

"I will refuse you nothing, my dearest, kind friend," she replied, "that I *can* grant; so to hear is to obey."

"Then never leave this, my poor roof, till young John Clavell's fate is determined. Here, under my roof, you shall live as if you were my daughter, and Mary shall be your maid. Come, come, I'll have no protests; you've sworn to obey me, and as to your residence here, I expect the most implicit obedience; and we'll see what can be done to get the poor dear lad free of the toils into which he has been driven."

The poor Doe could make no answer: she owed her life to Master Hastings, and through his influence she hoped to save the life of her lover. Tears filled her dove-like eyes, and chased each other down her cheeks. Mr. Hastings exclaimed, "There, there, it's all settled; don't cry, but go to Mary." And so saying, he took the Fair Doe in his arms, and imprinted a hearty kiss upon her forehead, and left the room, as the saying is, as happy as a king.

As for poor, faithful Mary, when she found that her young mistress was to remain at Woodlands, and that she, too, was to be installed there as lady's maid, her joy knew no bounds. She cried and laughed by turns,

and danced and raced about the old house, as if its curiously intricate staircases, going up two steps here, and three steps there, on purpose to throw people down, were only intended for exercise; but as all things must have an end, at last she settled down to her work the most attentive creature that ever lived.

It is now time that we should turn our attention to the fate of poor John Clavell; there was not a living soul in the land that was not sorry for him. Highway robbery in those days was not generally regarded as a serious or an ungentlemanlike crime. From a Lord Bishop down to well-to-do London tradesmen, history shows us this, and that the dignitary of the Church was shot in the act of robbing, by night, on Hounslow Heath, and numberless other instances go to prove that to be a "highwayman," was simply to adopt, or embrace, a dangerous game, with the play on the cards of shooting, or being shot, as the luck for money ran. The heavier penalty for taking money, over that of stealing deer, only made the risk the greater, and the daring, in some men's eyes, the more to be admired; so that though poor Master John Clavell, peached against by a villain who had been in his company, and whose inclination to brute violence on woman he had more than once restrained, was rather pitied than seriously condemned, and great hopes were entertained that the pardon of the Queen would be extended to him.

In the life that John Clavell had been leading, his

accomplishments were all of the ruder cast; with small-sword, singlestick, or quarterstaff, he was a proficient, and no one rode better. Indeed, in those days when scarcely any man rode hard to hounds, his nerve, as well as his hand and seat in the saddle, were the theme of general admiration. "The love of woman worketh wonders," is a very true saying, but whether it is my saying, or it has been said by others, does not matter. My own experience has shown me that it will sometimes refine the rudest nature, and induce the man to study accomplishments, and polite letters, if that man has not, to quote Shakspeare, "put an enemy in his mouth to steal away his brains." A man may lose his heart, and for that reason become a nicer and a better creature; but if he has lost his brains before he loses his heart, the loss of the heart will not recover for him his senses, but it is a thousand to one that he remains brutalized for ever.

True love ever leans to the side of poetry, and love often wakes up a vein of poetry, that had, like the seed of plants, laid beneath the soil, till the sun's ray reached it and coaxed it into vivification. So it was with John Clavell: debarred from the violent exercise to which he had been accustomed, and roused and refined to better things, he took to writing verses, addressing them to his royal mistress, the Queen, in solicitations for her pardon, and to the mistress of his heart, to show her his devotion. Two specimens of his poetry, one to

the Queen, and the other to the Fair Doe of Ferndith, will suffice for the curiosity of the reader, and to the reader I leave it to say which, the crown or the girl, most induced the Muse to gild his pen.

When a lover, suddenly torn from the first real affection of his heart, becomes incarcerated in the gloomy walls of a prison, and is lucky enough to have writing-tablets accorded to him, then it is that he reviews the wild *liaisons* of his earlier life, and shudders at the unworthy dross that had clouded, not eradically destroyed, what one day might become the germ of his better existence. Alas, in this instance, those promoters of a gallant death did not accord their powerful influence to ennoble the feelings that beset John Clavell, for "*fame*" was not

> "There to say who bleeds,"

Nor was

> "Honour's eye on daring deeds."

If death awaited him, all that he could do was to meet the remorseless tyrant like a man, and in his courageous bearing prove to the beautiful girl he had parted from at Woodlands, that at least his courage was worthy of a happier fate.

Shut up, with death or long imprisonment staring him in the face, the only thoughts which went to his couch with him at night, preyed on his soul in dreams, or met his first glance with the morrow's sun, were

profitless and unhappy. Not one single daring, wildly joyous, violently successful, act of his life came to his luckless side with a cheering smile. Sin saw only the victim of evil courses, and having made all that evil could make of him, sin turned sullenly away and left him there to die.

Not so the affection that had been but lately awakened in his heart—not so the sweet presence of her who had kindled in his breast that high, chivalrous devotion which does, and should always, attend on true love. Her image came to his thoughts wheresoever his thoughts had fled to. She seemed to come and take him away from grief, and to lead him from the cold, bare walls of his prison to the Summer Woodlands of the quiet Chase, and to sit with him in the midst of warbling songs and sweet flowers. From his dreams of trial, condemnation, and death, it was merciful to be aroused; to be so from his dreams of her was misery, and therein he prayed to be again deceived by sleep. And then the comfort—to him, the splendid comfort!—to dwell on the fact that he had saved her from brutal violence, though her safety so achieved had brought destruction on himself; and more, that after saving her from brutal violence, he also had saved her very life! Thus, then, poor young Clavell had some solace in his dreary prison,—something, at least, to comfort him,—something to look back upon; and, as we have seen in later life, the very first well-placed affection recalled a

really noble, high-spirited youth, a gentleman born and bred, from a vicious course of life of some duration, and made him a better man.

His first attempt at poetry—he had never before written a rhyme in his life, except to chronicle some low act, or turn into jest a serious matter,—ran thus, and was written in the Tower, or King's Bench :—

> "Dearest, adieu ! I need no jewelled ring
> To fix thine image on my loving heart.
> The sky—the air, can best remembrance bring
> Of thee, from whom I thus am doomed to part.
> No flower the garden boasts most fair and sweet,
> But which reminds me of some gentle grace ;
> And when I gaze above, it is to meet
> The mild expression of thy beauteous face.
> To thee the bird yet sings its plaintive lay,
> Still the bright fountains murmur in the grove
> Oh, let them speak of me, my Love, I pray,
> And never cease to tell thee that I love."

I will not weary my readers with the effusions of a love-sick heart, for the first time awakened by the magic power of well-placed affection ; but we must shortly quote from some of the poetical addresses he strung together by way of moving the heart of a sovereign not always inclined to merciful consideration, though a crowned head should not ever bear the blame attached to sovereign deeds, particularly in later days, for in "life and death" the crown merely nods an acquiescence to the dictates of a home secretary.

One of his poetical addresses to the Queen ran thus, though it is too long to quote it all:—

> "The woodbine, and the violet,
> The season of the year forget,
> And to attend your sweetness do
> Grow everywhere you tread or go.
> I, in the summer of my life,
> When guilt and justice were at strife,
> Was, by your royal breath, (strange thing!)
> Unwithered, turned into my spring."

This poem was addressed "To Her Never-to-be-equalled Majesty the Queen of Great Britain."

There were many other addresses of his, in prose and verse, addressed to the Crown, and a poem of considerable length, under the title of "A recantation of an ill-led life: or, a discovery of the highway law. With vehement dissuasions to all (in that kind) offenders." As also many "cantations, admonitions, and full instructions how to know, shune, and apprehend a thiefe. Most necessary for all honest travellers to peruse, observe, and practise."

In one of his poems to the Queen he writes as follows:—

> "I that have robbed so oft, am now bid stand,
> Death and the law assault me, and demand
> *My life* and *means!* I never used men so,
> But having ta'en their money, let them go.
> Yet *must* I die! And is there no relief?
> The *King of Kings* took mercy on a thief;

So may *my* gracious Queen, in mercy save me,
Although grim death and law do thus outbrave me.
God is her precedent, and men shall see
Her mercy is beyond severity."

John Clavell also addressed a poem to "His honourable friend, his ever and well approved good uncle, Sir William Clavell, Knight Banneret," praying him to

"Forget his foul offences, one and all,
Until some brave and noble action shall
Bring him anew acquainted."

To his country and his friends he promised to devote the remainder of his life and to the profession of arms: but whether a gentler fate than the fortunes of war was in store for him remains to be seen.

John Clavell suffered a long incarceration, despite the great interest taken in his fate by the noblemen and gentry of the counties of Dorset, Wiltshire, and Hampshire. Broken in spirit, weakened in some degree in health, he was seated in his prison-room one summer morning,—it was not yet noon,—brooding over his misfortunes, but still wrapped up in mental contemplation of the lovely Fair Doe of Fernditch Lodge, when the step of his gaoler was heard outside the door, accompanied by the clink of his bunch of ponderous keys. The door was opened very wide, and yet the gaoler did not enter; no other human foot was heard, but *still* something trod the floor,

advancing on, and—to the speechless astonishment of the prisoner, Rufus—the great deer greyhound from Woodlands very sedately advanced into his room, and, before he came up to him, paused and looked back into the passage.

My readers must not expect me to describe what it was that very nearly filled poor Clavell's heart to breaking, or what rush of wild, thrilling hope it was that shook him from head to foot. He sprang to his feet, a heavy but a swift step came on, and, in an instant, he found himself in the hearty, stalwart arms of his friend Master Hastings, who nearly shook his hand off.

"*Pardon,* my boy!" Master Hastings said; "*You're pardoned!* Here, Mary, bring her in—she *must* be better now, though she nearly fainted on those cursed rugged stairs. There," he cried, as the Fair Doe entered leaning on Mary's arm, for she was still much overcome by her feelings; "there, there she is. She insisted on accompanying me to bring this intelligence from our gracious sovereign, though I told her she'd have some difficulty in keeping up. It's all settled now," turning to Mary; done and said at an appropriate time, for he put his back towards the lovers who were for the moment in each other's arms. "It's all settled now; and, please God, to-morrow night or next day we'll all be back at Woodlands, and ransack the pulpit. Don't blush, Julia, there's no

parson in it, or there would be less pudding; but we'll get as much good or more, *for all I know*, out of it, with nothing but God's blessing on what we find. There, John, look sharp, get yourself shaved and smart, and join us on the parade here; we'll wait for you. Hallo, old dog! come on; we'll back to Cranbourne Chase, and then,—

> "A haunch to me,
> The neck to thee;
> The hyde and horns
> As the keeper's fee."

So saying, Mr. Hastings, the Fair Doe, his splendid dog, and Mary, repaired to the parade and amused themselves until joined by John Clavell.

On a lovely summer's evening, just before nine o'clock, and previous to that melancholy hour, the passing of the longest day, a large, heavy, cumbrous vehicle, with four long-tailed horses, came down the avenue towards the entrance to Woodlands House. As it stopped at the first gate, embosomed in woods as it was, what a chorus of happy, wild minstrelsy from every tree and thicket greeted the ears of the travellers. The brilliant thrush could scarce keep to her leading score, though she had exalted herself to the tip-top twig of the highest tree, so great was the confused warble from the bushes down below; its cadences in some measure defined by the low mellow

warble of the blackbird. When that sable songster shut his bright orange beak to gain a moment's breath, there stole forth the beautifully restful modulation of the wood pigeon, while the shorter note of the blue rock, and the soft purring of the turtle-dove, smoothed every echo, and sent forth on the sweet, warm air an embodied harmony, assigned by Heaven to its creatures without the art of man.

In that pause at the gate, amid those sweet and restful happy sounds, in the enjoyment of the warm honeyed air that gently swept through the open windows of the carriage, there *was* a heaven upon earth to Julia Lorn and John Clavell, as hand-in-hand they sat, and looked into each other's eyes for words which could *not* come.

As for Master Hastings, he looked the impersonification of bluff satisfaction, while Mary did little else than laugh to herself and play with the head and ears of the great gaze-hound couched in the bottom of the carriage at their feet. Men, women, hounds, hawks, and dogs, were in front of the house to give their gratulations; hounds bayed, dogs barked, and hawks fluttered their wings and screamed or whistled. The cellar brought forth all its treasures, the pudding perfect, the pulpit ponderous in its viands, the oysters fresh from Poole, alive and gaping, the sack and rosemary sweet; and when the happy, loving female guests had sought their rooms, and Hastings had struggled into his

smoking-gown and easy chair, "faced," as the vulgar saying goes, by John Clavell, in a dress extemporised for the occasion, talk of "the Indian pipe of peace!" such as came home with me from my prairie travels in the far West, and which was supposed to have kept the red men quiet,—that long, clumsy piece of brass-embossed wood, with its large, red, half-marble, half-clay bowl of unknown material, never had half so much peace in it as was contained in the blackened bowls of the short, favourite pipes, that gave forth the clouds of intense satisfaction from the lips of Master Hastings and his honoured guest.

Not long after this, John Clavell was espoused to Dame Julia Lorn, known always as the Fair Doe of Ferndith: and when they did not reside with their never-failing, generous friend at Woodlands, they lived in a house on the borders of Cranbourne Chase, until such time as John Clavell came into his family possessions. "A life" of happiness then was theirs, and "after death," we trust an everlasting joy.

THE COLLEEN RHUE.

THE COLLEEN RHUE.

CHAPTER I.

A PERIOD of nearly forty years has elapsed since the passing of the occurrences I am about to relate; but though that wide stretch of time in men's lives, has tided over the sands that at the moment recount the impressions of feet, some of them no longer living, still to my certain knowledge there are those alive with all their senses about them at this moment, and much of their strength, who will remember the facts on which I found my narrative.

The scene of the story was on the seacoast of a western county of "old Ireland," bearing a very ill-fame at the period of this history from the nocturnal depredations and incendiary fires that made night horrible, and drove the landlord who had any money to move with, to seek a quieter and a safer residence elsewhere than his own house and his paternal acres afforded him.

Slaughtered sheep, burning "haggards," robbing of arms, threatening notices, and coffins dug in the mould

in front of the doors of inmates who, for some cause or other, had rendered themselves odious to the disaffected, in the aggregate made such a list of serious crimes that no one who had any other place to go to, cared to stay where life and property were in so much danger.

Written notices had been served on several farmers; among them one of the name of Curly.

Whatever may be the state of a country, or the inclination among the lowest of its inhabitants to commit crimes of every description, we do not find that it deters the stranger and the sportsman from seeking the wilds about it in his loved occupation of the chase, and the locality of which I am now writing, in seals, wild fowl, and other things, offered a tempting prospect to a bold heart and steady hand, in a greater degree too, because the rough and ill-conditioned state of the neighbourhood, kept the generality of sportsmen away and left a wide fair field for the explorations of a man who loved the wilds, would roam them at any risk, and cared not for any danger that man's enmity could make him.

A great deal of the coast was bold and precipitous, with here and there a break in it of wide, stretching, shallow strand. Occasionally the rock-bound tide was looked down on by huge perpendicular cliffs that sent their giant shadows far upon the waves—in short, a wilder or more beautiful scene than this western coast of Ireland afforded, never entered into the imagination

of the most insane painter that ever existed, and it was to this scene in his love for sport of every kind that our hero, George Ritman, proceeded.

The household that George had brought with him was not an extensive one: it simply consisted of himself, a man servant, and a splendid retriever of very powerful dimensions, called Nep, who was equally good on land and water, and if his master needed him in any other capacity, Neptune was always ready to fight with man or dog. Well, the first thing that George Ritman did, was to look for a lodging with *decent* people, and at last he found a widow woman who really had two little rooms for him, with another for his servant, that with good peat fires, when they choked him not too much, made him comfortably warm. She undertook to "put him up and do for him." "Ocht, if his honour didn't mind her poor ways, she knew she didn't know how, where to get him a drhap of the rael thing if the like of his honour's flask should get the laste taste empty; and she'd do't wid all the pleasure in life."

George at once closed with her lodgings, and desired her to procure the assistance of some girl who could enact the part of charwoman, without much shoeing.

Autumn had passed, and winter had set in; "plumps" of wild fowl were in every swamp and under every sheltering nook along the shore, and George Ritman and "his honour's big black dog" were as well known to the surrounding "pissantry" as the golden plover and

the snipes were who haunted the bogs where the pissantry cut their fuel.

One afternoon George had returned to his bothy rather earlier than usual, to take off his wet clothes and to dress himself warm and dry for a stand at flight-time for fowl, when he was aroused from his assortment of ammunition by a loud growl from Nep, and the slow advance of that intelligent quadruped with very stiff legs towards the door. Nep had got so used to the widow and her unshod helpmaid, and to some of the people George had taken out shooting with him, all of whom he amply remunerated, that he had not been heard to growl for a long time ; so his master, making him a sign to be quiet, opened the door of his room and looked at the front door of the cabin, not more than a yard from him, under the idea that it was some fresh applicant for sporting employment, come to report on the larger kinds of game, the seal, the wild swan, or eagle. His astonishment may be more easily imagined than described when he found himself thus unexpectedly placed *vis-à-vis* with a well dressed, young, and very pretty girl. Though there was a something about her that spoke of a cabin residence and a constant communication with those of the rank of well-to-do small farmers, still her graceful carriage and every motion of her beautiful figure, her delicately formed white hands and her little well shaped and well shod feet, in pretty little furred boots, with the clean

round ancles above them rising gradually up to the swell of the beautiful leg, not much concealed by too long petticoats, all spoke of a lineage somewhere, on one side or the other, that did not certainly emanate from rustic bliss. Her complexion, too, was delicately white and red, her long luxuriant glossy ringlets so deeply, so darkly, so *intensely red,* that the hand of Nature in assigning to it its hue, just refrained from making it dark auburn! What made her beautiful face still more remarkable was, that the eyebrows, exquisitely pencilled and smooth, were almost black, infinitely darker than her hair, while the pupils beneath them were of a rich brown, and so arch and merry in their furtive expression, that it was almost impossible to know whether she laughed at or with the man with whom she was in conversation. The only fault in her face, if her face had a fault at all, was in the nose. It was not an aquiline nose, nor was it a straight nose, nor a snub nose, and yet of the three it partook more of the last. The darkness of her eyebrows and the bright tints of her complexion brought out the curiously rich red hue of her long silken hair. When her hair was permitted to fall, if, when in a playful mood, she shook her head, stooped a little, and then stood upright, not a feature could be seen. So well did her long, thick, red hair envelope her figure far below the hips, that unless her little feet could be detected, no one could be sure which was the front or

back of her full, well formed person, for her hair was a sort of extinguisher of all outline, so immensely full and thick were its voluminous proportions.

Here, then, was an agreeable relief to the eyes of a young man, which for weeks or months had seen nothing more than the coarse pissantry and red bare feet, among whom, if there chanced to be a pretty face, it was begrimed with dirt. Surprise lit up both their faces,—his with decided admiration, hers with a smile of pleasure concealed under a degree of bashfulness which only enhanced her beauty.

"Can I call anybody for you?" said George Ritman; "or can I in any way execute your commands? To do anything for you would afford me infinite pleasure."

"Oh no," she replied; "I only came to see the woman of the house on a matter of no consequence. It will do some other day."

She was turning to go away, when George, opening wide the door of his little sitting-room, said, "Pray do me the great kindness at least to sit down and rest on such a chair as my shooting-quarters will afford. There is a passing shower now falling, and here at least you will be safe and dry; and by the time you have rested yourself, the good woman, my hostess, will be in; so you will not have had the walk for nothing. His charming visitor made no direct reply to this, but fixing her eyes on the retriever Nep, who was lying on the floor, she exclaimed, "Oh, what a darling dog!" and kneeling down

at once caressed him and kissed his head, and George Ritman closed the door.

"Yes," he said, "my dear young lady, I need not interrupt your caresses of my retriever, for as 'the lion is said to know the true prince,' Nep always knows that the caresses of a graceful hand are ever duly appreciated by his master; so if they are offered to him by as fair a creature as is now taking notice of him, he is to receive them in all gratitude. No man, other than myself, dare caress him as you are doing now."

"Oh," she said, "dear good Nep, I love you all the better for that, and she kissed his great, broad, black forehead again, a kiss which Nep returned to her cheek, glancing his bright yellow eyes up at his master's face, to know if he was wrong in doing so. Then he read that it was the only time in his life that his master would most willingly have changed places with him.

"So you like dogs!" exclaimed George, also kneeling down by his four-footed favourite, and by one who with half that number of understandings, he felt as if he could have made a greater pet of still.

"'Deed I do," she said, looking up at him, for he was still taller than she was, when both were on their knees; and then both patted Nep's most willing head, and somehow or other their hands touched each other when doing so, and George saw that her little soft white hand could neither have been bred in a cabin nor have done any sort of office of a rough description.

"Who was she, what was she?" The thought flew across his mind, and he resolved to make a dash at the discovery. As they rose together, and he put a chair for her, which she accepted, he said, "You must have had a long walk here from any house I know of as likely to hold so fair an occupant, my dear young lady?"

"I'm not a lady," she replied, colouring up a little. "I'm a poor farmer's daughter,—that is, he's not poor, he's very well-to-do. My father's name is Curly, over there away," pointing with her hand, "and you can call in, *if you like,* and see us. Mother will be glad to welcome you, 'deed she will, so come whenever you and Nep like. I am Kathleen Curly."

"Well," rejoined George, "you puzzle me. Don't be angry with me: I can't help speaking to you, Kathleen, as if we had been friends for years, though you have not lived many. How so pretty and well dressed, so nice a creature in every way, could be found in this wild place, and domesticated in one of the farms, as they call them here, for the life of me I can't imagine. It seems so odd, too, that I should never even have heard of you. Surely some of the wild young men in these parts must have talked *of* you, and yet I never heard the name of 'Kathleen Curly' as one which had driven them wilder than their own habitations."

"Perhaps not," said his companion, laughing, "but suppose I have another name as well! What then?"

"Ha ha! I thought so. You are not, then, *a farmer's* daughter?"

"Yes, I am, and I live not far from here. My other name is only 'the *Colleen Rhue.*'"

"Indeed! that is a name I have often heard spoken of, too, with admiration, and longed to know the girl to whom it belonged; for the young men about here rave of you in their rough way to each other, and crack each other's skulls in your honour, though, judging from your appearance and theirs, the utmost any of them could have done in making your acquaintance was to pull off his tattered hat and wish you 'the top of the morning.'"

"Yes," she said, "'deed that's about it. I speak to them all kindly, but I keep myself to myself, and don't go far from home. Mother's very kind to me, and lets me do as I please, and tells me to listen to what she calls the addresses of a respectable '*Boy.*' Oh, he is such a quiz, so funny—sort of blue knit stockings, and short things unbuttoned at his knees, a tall crown to his hat, much knocked in, with a very little brim, a cock nose very far up from his lip, and his chin very far down from his mouth, a round red face like the sun in an eclipse, short, straight sandy hair, his only redeeming quality loads of jolly humour, and rather a strong, manly, muscular figure. There now! don't say I have not requited your curiosity by giving you a description of *my*

'*Boy!*' Mother bids me accept what she calls his 'addresses.' Shall I do so?"

"I must leave *that* point to be settled by you, my dear 'Colleen Rhue;' but I cannot be your sage Mentor unless I know *how far* you have permitted his suit to go,—I won't say 'encouraged it,' because that I think you have *not* done?"

"Oh, not very far; his advances *are* so funny!"

"How far? Has he told you of his love?"

"Yes, to a certain extent, after his humour."

"And what answer did you make?"

"None by words, for he never *spoke* of his love for me; and as his signs were not those that I *could* reciprocate in his suit, if he has one, as my mother *says* he has, they remain unanswered. All he did was to shout, leap up into the air, smile at me, nod, kiss his shillelagh, and slap his thigh, and look after me as long as I was in sight."

"Well, then, as your sage Mentor, from these recesses of my hermitage I reply, 'If you don't love him, don't encourage him. Yours is a far higher walk than his, I know of none you would not grace.'"

"Here is the old lady," she said, on seeing George Ritman's hostess pass the window, having been from home to fetch her esteemed lodger some little additional comforts. "I must go; come and see mother, won't you,—you and Nep? I'll put the cat out of the way. Good bye."

She gave George her sweetly pretty little hand, and, without much resistance on her part, he pressed his lips upon it, and bade her adieu, thinking that he would most decidedly pay *her mother a visit*, but perhaps the visit would be paid in reality to Kathleen the "Colleen Rhue," for there was no doubt whatever, that this, their first interview, had made a very deep impression on him who now might be termed her lover.

As may be imagined, George Ritman was not long before he paid a visit to "Misther and Misthress Curly's farm, admired her father's nice little dairy of cows, spoke praisefully of the dame's fowls, and, last of all the little things, paid a compliment to the big pigs.

The one great object of his journey of course was Kathleen Curly, the Colleen Rhue, and to her he devoted all his attentions, still puzzled to understand why she was so infinitely better dressed than any of the girls around her, better educated, and so much superior to them in look, mind, and manners. "She's no more Mrs. Curly's daughter than I am," he said to himself; "but who she is, or what she may be in birth or degree, to me is of no moment, for I love her beyond life itself. A more enchanting beauty does not live."

Well, the first meeting led to the second meeting; and the second to many more. Whichever way George Ritman was likely to return from shooting, the Colleen

Rhue was sure to take a walk in that direction, and occasionally when the day was still and fine he would take her in his boat on the fresh salt sea, and at such times the pissants used to wink to each other and say, "Out in the boat it is; but, be dad! it's not the duck with wings he's afther."

Of course, among the small farmers there were grown up young men, like one "Corny Lynch," the Boy said to be paying "his addresses," the remarkable admirer she had alluded to in her first interview with George, who were, after their fashion, longing for "her company," and many of these regarded George with no friendly eye; but as, added to a liberal hand in regard to money if they did anything to please him, George had a very long and muscular arm, and a "big baste" of a dog always at his heels, no one thought it worth the risk they might run, if they molested him.

The sole follower of the "Colleen Rhue" who made any stir in the matter was this "Corny Lynch." In some way or other he got it into his honest, but not very clear, head, that Kathleen Curly really loved him, but was too proud to let the feelings be known to him or to any others. "Augh, be dad!" he would say to some of his bosom friends, "you daunt belave she loves me! Why she can't look at me without giving me a swater smile than ever came from the lips of a bottle of the rael thing, and as to mating me in a lane, her falings won't permit on it. Dosent she just about turn

back in my face, augh! and go the t'other way, a showing her blessed ancles, that makes my flesh creep upon the bones of me to behold!"

One day poor Corny Lynch came peeping about Curly's farm, first here, then there, and wandering around as if he was in search of something: it couldn't be Kathleen, because she had gone out to meet George: when at last he ran against Mrs. Curly, the very person he wished to speak to, if he could only find her alone.

"Oh, Misther Lynch, is that you? I've sane ye prowling about some time, like a jew that had lost his box," said Mrs. Curly. "Won't you walk in and sit down a bit? Kathleen's out, and so's my good man; but come in and taste a rael dhrap of the right thing, or a dhrap of tae, laced a bit to make it comfortable. Come in, do!"

Corny accepted the invitation in rather a confused and sheepish manner; and when in the room sat himself down on the extreme edge of the chair, his shillelagh betwixt his knees, and his hat stuck on the top of it.

"And how's your pigs, mum, and the heifers the master's a getting ready for the fair no doubt? But there, Corny Lynch, that's meself, *'twan't that* as I want to talk about. It's the Colleen Rhue that's on my tongue, in my heart, aye and, by me faith! on me body night and day. I loves her, a darlint, and may I have her?"

"Really I dont know, Misther Lynch. Have you ever spoken to Kathleen anent it?" replied Mrs. Curly, not knowing very well what to say to the rather abrupt declaration.

"No, be dad! the voice I've none at all at all when she's anigh. I can't spake a word 'twere iver so; but there, Misthress Curly, I looks it, and she smiles her concessions, her swate consent. Will ye spake the word that's kind for me? Take her beautiful hand, as I long to do, and, augh, by the powers! smodder her cherry lips wid kisses. She can't say 'no' to you, and I'm the boy that'll put all them kisses back again what you takes away, and ten millionf tousands more!"

"Well, Mr. Lynch, I'll spake to her for you, and tell you what she says."

Up jumped Misther Lynch to his full height, and with a loud hoop, and flourish of leg and stick, he cried, "It's all right, it's all right!" and slapping himself on the breast, he said, "Corny, Corny, my boy, ye're a made man; who dars to say you're not?" and he looked fiercely round the room; but there being no one there save himself and Mrs. Curly, he subsided into his usual jolly good humoured manner, bade Mrs. Curly to be sure and keep her promise, and took his leave, whistling as he went, not for want of thought, but for joy.

When Kathleen came home, Mrs. Curly repeated the conversation, or rather the import of it, which she had had with Corny Lynch, and was rather distressed at

the way in which Kathleen treated the matter. She went into fits of laughter, and assured her mother that "she never met the funny man without laughing at him, she could not help it, he *was* so comical."

"Well but, my dear," continued Mrs. Curly gravely, "you must marry somebody at some time or other, and you may get worse offers than this. Mr. Lynch is well-to-do, as the saying is, and has the money to keep a wife and little ones—but there, if you laugh again when I mention the little ones, it's not the laste taste in life of use for me to prache to you. I shall lave Misther Lynch to plade his own cause; but do, my dearest Kattie, be kind or at laste sival to 'em if he does."

"I'll he civil to him, mother, never fear; he'll get nothing *but* smiles out of me; so I'm sure Misther Lynch, with his funny broken hat, the lift of his heel, and the flourish of his stick, ought to be content. I'll frown at the rest of the boys and laugh at him. There now, ain't I a good girl? Now, mammy, I'll show you something—look here!" and she held out a white little hand, with a very handsome turquoise ring on the little finger. "Is not it pretty? George—that is, Mr. Ritman—gave it to me, in exchange, you know, for the comforter I knitted for him to put round his neck when he went after wild fowl. Exchange is no robbery, is it, mammy? So it's not wrong for me to have it. Hum! I *wish* George Ritman would propose to me! Wouldn't he make you a nice son-in-law, mammy, and be just the

husband for me? Handsome, well dressed, well born, well educated, and nice clean hands, not like the men about here, who never wash their hands and not often their faces. I met two such ill-looking men sauntering about the paths and lanes near our house—great, tall-looking, rough monsters, all hair and dirt. I suppose they'll come and propose to you for me next. One of them looked very hard at me, and though I can't call to mind ever having seen either of them before, yet I think I should know them again; they gave me quite a shudder."

At this period, old Misther Curly came in, and the conversation ceased, Mrs. Curly having quite made up her mind that Corny Lynch had not much chance for the hand of the Colleen Rhue. "However," she thought to herself, "Corny Lynch is a proper man, and there's no saying what time and attention may do, when the wildfowl and seals are all over, and the sportsman gone. While he is here, my Kathleen will be brought to think of no one else. Ah me! I wish she was married, and married well, to some one who would take care of her. She holds herself above the boys that are ready to mate with her, and where is she to find better? She may marry the sportsman; but his honour being, as I think, of some high family, worse might come of *that* matter. I wish he was either married to her or gone, with all my heart."

The priest who resided near the Moy at Ballina was

one morning sitting at his frugal breakfast, when he saw Corny Lynch walking up and down the little grass-plot before the door, and casting an occasional glance or two to ascertain if his riverence was coming to the end of his buttered toast, as he had a laudable desire not to intrude himself into the holy presence, before the all-powerful expounder of the Word had made an end of his creature comforts.

Father Touslem saw this, and appreciated Corny's diffidence, when, as he washed down the last bit of toast with the last gulp of his tea, he muttered to himself, "Ocht, that's a broth of a boy that Corny. I wonder what he'll be afther saying to me. The pig's ill, or he's broken somebody's head, or the like matter of that! Halloo, Corny! that's you, isn't it? D'ye want to spake to me?"

"Yes, yer riverence," replied Corny, pulling off his hat, twirling it round, and scraping back with one heel as dogs sometimes do with their two hinder feet. "It's just about with your riverence that I would be so bould as to say won word with."

"Come in—or no, stay—I'll be out with you in a pig's whisper," replied the good-natured priest,—he was not a sneaking Jesuit, but a Roman candlestick of the old-fashioned school and light—and so saying, Father Touslem put on his religiously shaped covering to his head, and stepped out upon the little lawn.

"Now, Corny, what is it you want with me?"

"Augh, be dad! yer riverence, I amost forgit; the tone of your voice is it what daunts me like, and I most fear I shall niver remember."

"Cudgel your own brains, Corny, then now, if ye can find them, instead of knocking at the brains of other people. Is anything gone wrong at home?"

"Naugh, yer riverence, there's nothing wrong there; and, be dad! it's just meself that won't put anything wrong there if I knows it; and it's just that that I come to see your riverence upon."

"Hey, Corny, it's a tub of the rael cratur,—is that it?"

"No, your riverence, it's nothing to do with the like of that."

"What then, Corny? You want to keep a greyhound with his tail cut off, and call him a sheep-dog, though he lurches after nothing but the Colonel's hares—is that it?"

"No, yer riverence, the divil a bit."

"Then you wish to ask me if I think you could keep a sow in addition to your mother's pig—is that it? But, Corny, when you spake to a priest be done with the divil."

"Tunder and oons! I ax your pardon, sir, but, yer riverence, you've hit it now: it's just that *same sort of thing* that I'm thinking about. Does your riverence think it's a terrible onasy thing like to get married?"

"Uneasy, Corny,—what d'ye mane?"

"Onasy, yer riverence, if the mother ain't what she didn't ought to have been. Onasy, not just right, not what 'ud plase the Holy Vergin, if she knowed it."

"If you mane, Corny, that the girl you think of marrying has not been a good girl, and not led a respectable life, it would be what you call an 'onasy thing' to marry her, and I tell you you'd better keep out of it. Who is it you're thinking of marrying?"

"Oh, by dad! your riverence, she's a pretty girl, with as clane a pair of heels to her, as ever deer had at the lakes; them divils of boys at the fair can't say she's got hay in her shoes, that her calves are always down a looking afther! No, be gorra! she's enough to set a young fellow a trailing his coat alongst the ground to see who'd tread on the tail of it, and all for love of her!"

"Well, Corny, and who is the smart girl you so much admire? Where does she live? Perhaps I know something anent her."

"Well, your riverence, my tongue's in for it now: I'll spake the word. It's just Kathleen Curly, the Colleen Rhue."

"Kathleen Curly," rejoined the priest. "Kathleen Curly! Why she is the smartest girl in these parts. I should have thought, Corny, that she wouldn't have had you; for she looks a good deal higher, if all things are true that have been told to me."

"Aucht, yer riverence!" said Corny, clenching his

little-brim'd high-crowned hat into a ball between his hands; "I know what it is yer riverence manes. It's that flory chap, young George Ritman, aucht! what pretends to be down here a doing nothing at all at all; it's him yer riverence thinks she looks to, but I'll soon put her out of consate on him, I will; I'll collar my coat, and let him tread on its tail if he dares, and my shillelagh shall break his head, aucht! and then she'll be afther dancing a conqueror's dance with me when I like. Besides, yer riverence, I have proposed to her own self for her, so there's a step gained, or I don't know the maning of woman!"

"Well, Corny," asked the priest, "and what did she say to that? You've talked about marriage being 'onasy,'—was there much comfort in the answer she gave you?"

"Augh, be dad! all right, yer riverence: she tould me to go about my business, and she'd attend to hers, which was as much as to say, when we had both settled our affairs, and got ready, that she'd ave me. That ticket's right enough; but the thing I wanted to ask you is not come yet."

"Out wid it, ye lumbering divil that ye are, the Almighty forgive me!" replied the priest; "what's the use of all this talk if it's about a thing you don't mane. What is it you want to know? what is it you're driving at?"

"Yer riverence, sir, 'tis this. When the Col, up

there ayont, was living at the big house on him, as a bacheldore, there came from Dublin a handsome girl, as housemaid, and that there Mary Hanoran was this here Kathleen Curly's mother. The bab was took from her, without her laving the place, and put to nurse with Mrs. Curly. Then the Col he lugs out, and makes the like of it, yer riverence, straight wid both the Curlys, and then they calls this Kathleen their daughther. I'm a *dacent* boy, yer riverence, and if so be 'twould be onasy like to marry when there was no marriage afore, why, accepted or not, at a word from yer riverence, I'll break the heart amost of Kathleen, by saying I'll have no doing with her, as the blessed Vergin's not in it at all, at all, or at laste, wasn't."

"Corny," replied the priest, "I'll go bail, my boy, you don't break Kathleen's heart, whatever you may do by Mr. George Ritman's head; though I think, too, that if you came together his head's the safest of the two. Go home, Corny; think no more about Kathleen, for she don't mean to have you. She's refused you once, and will refuse you again fifty times over; so be asy in that matter, and let her alone. Is there anything else you want to ask me? If so, out with it in no time, man, for I must away to some ladies in retreat. By the powers of snuff! what with the consates of some old nuns, and the wincings of some young 'uns, dhrams and indigestion, visitations to be explained, and sacrets to be heard in confession, that need to be no sacrets at

all, a priest has but a hard time of it. Say on, man, and be off wid ye."

"Yes, yer riverence; it an't that I'm out of all throuble; yet, yer riverence, there's a little matther that the conscience of me isn't mighty asy upon. Now this Miss Kathleen, what's said to be the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Curly, yer know, was not edicated by a praist, yer riverence, but she goes to t'other place."

"Well, and what is that to you, Corny? she don't take you *there* alongst with her?"

"No, yer riverence, not there; but she went, you know, and I went to look afther her, so we got there; but some how, I heard something whilst I was alongst wid her—I hear's 'em a talking about mericles."

"Corny!" exclaimed the priest, severely, shaking his fist at him; "if you haven't been to the t'other place, you're likely to go to one of the t'other places, for you've been somewhere you ought not to go to, ye born divil. Now come, Corny, no lies,—I know it all as well as if you had tould me. You've been led astray, Corny, and it grieves me to say it. You've been to hear some of those Irish Church Missionaries' temptations, Corny, delusions; the wake mind of you's been clane upset; tell me, sirrah, have you been to hear those missionaries, or have you been to church? *Aye, or no?*"

"No; it's yes I mane, yer riverence, no—yes."

"Come, come!" exclaimed the priest, reddening up;

"tell me no lies, I say. Tell me the truth, ye vagabond, or, by the holy powers! I'll get it out of you."

"Well, then," replied Corny, twisting his crumpled hat about; "och, be dad! it wur at one of them lecters, as they call 'em, that ris up the difficulty in the mind of me, and sent me to my holy father, that's yerself, yer riverence, to tache me the maning of won word, as I didn't know the differ of. What I wants to know is, what's a mericle, and what's not? Will your riverence tell me what it was, and what it was not?"

"Corny, Corny," replied his riverence, "this is all mighty bad what you tell me: you had no sort of business at a place of that kind, and you ought to be ashamed to have gone there. What business have you to be speculating on what a thing is and what it is not, you vagabond, that you are? you're to belave that a thing is just what your priest tells you it is, and to swallow down his holy word as if it was your mother's milk, and that's whiskey, ye blackghard; but I'll explain what a miracle is—turn round!"

Corny obeyed, directly facing clean about, and putting his back to the priest, when the holy father took him such a kick, "where a kick hurts honour more, than many wounds laid on before," as nearly sent him on his nose.

As soon as Corny could recover himself, he looked

again at the priest, very red in the face, his eyes watering, and rubbing the place assaulted with his dexter hand.

"Did you fale that?" said the priest.

"Fale it, yer riverence! I belave I did, and no mistake. Would yer riverence like to see the mark you've made?"

"No, Corny, you've got your question answered. You know what a miracle is now. You say you fale that kick?"

"Och, by the holy Vergin! I *do* indeed; the likes of me won't sit in comfort for a week; fale it, indeed I *do!*"

"Well, then, Corny, it would be a miracle if *you did not;* so you know what a miracle is *now,* and that's all I can do for you. So be off wid you, and don't go to lectures again."

CHAPTER II.

THE earliest symptoms of returning spring had commenced to show themselves: small and very diminutive wild buds began to peep up through the grasses; and here and there a lingering kiss, from a too fickle sunbeam, had coaxed to the infraction of its retiring and modest shrine a bloom, that some fell frost was yet sure to nip away. The pewit wheeled about, his first

wooing flight since the last hard frost, and dipped and rose, then skimmed the heather as if his wings could never make a fault, and all seemed to breathe of happiness and love about to come.

George and Kathleen were seated in a small amphitheatre of crowning rocks, with a little green lawn before them, terminating in a precipitous descent to the ocean, there, in gentle swells, breaking in sleep-inviting harmonious monotony on the pebbly beach beneath. Shut in, as they were, on all sides, save the open view in front, far removed from listening ear or human ken, they spoke with the accent of love, unfettered by any sort of apprehension, looked into each other's faces, and kissed and kissed again.

"Well, George," said Kathleen, pushing with her small white fingers the hair from his brow, which had fallen dishevelled from its luxuriant growth above, and looking into his face a look that angels alone could look, if Heaven gave them the will and wish to do so,—"then we are to leave these inhospitable regions to-morrow, and fly to love and a better land? 'Where thou goest I will go,' dear George, you know the rest; but we will not talk of 'dying,' or where we are to be 'buried;' that must remain in the mellowed distance of the long future: enough for us is the bliss of the present hour!' Why is not your watchful companion, and our faithful guard, dear Nep, with us to-day? I seem lost without him, he was such what you call a chaperon;

and his vigilance never would let us be too suddenly approached by any evil company."

"Dear old Nep, my love," replied George, "has cut the ball of his foot against the jagged points of a rock, in retrieving a wild goose; so I dressed it with some toilette vinegar, that once belonged to the lady, the Baroness of Louis de Bourbon celebrity, and left him at home to rest it. He will be well to-morrow."

"I don't like to be without him," Kathleen replied. "I cannot tell why, but his presence ever seems to me to be connected with my happiness."

"And may not that be, my own, my own sweet love, because he ever comes with me?" said George, drawing her smiling face still closer to his own. "Neptune and myself are inseparable, save on this chance occasion."

"This chance occasion," replied Kathleen, losing all brightness at the moment from her generally laughing and merry eyes; "this chance occasion! 'Chance' seems a word that has never its worth assigned to it. 'Chance!' it seems only to mean accident; and yet, from chance all the most important phases of our existence seem to arise."

At that moment a large steadily and stealthily floating shadow threw its broad disc on the green-sward before them, and ere they could look up, that shrill, unearthly yell or shriek of an eagle rang through the air; and wheeling not thirty yards above their heads, the monarch of the feathered race, and the

fell destroyer of fawn and lamb, seemed to float on his motionless wings, and to be guided as to his ethery way entirely by voluntary desire.

"The eagle, the eagle," exclaimed George in great excitement, "that I have been so often after! Now that I have neither gun nor rifle, he comes to flaunt his plumage in my face; see how careless he is of our presence!"

As he said this, the eagle, with a louder shriek, accompanied by the sudden beating of his wings to raise himself further from the earth, shot upward through the air, as if scared from his propriety by some sudden object close at hand, distasteful to love as to the bird of Jove; and George, well versed in all and every phase of natural history, knew that the eagle had seen an enemy in some strange position near at hand, an eavesdropper, perhaps, to his interview with Kathleen.

In an instant, directing his attention to the locality of the scream and sudden change in the eagle's flight, George sprang to the edge of the rocks, and saw the figure of a man descending by a rope, which, when he gained a footing beneath, he shook from the promontory that held it above, and then disappeared behind some further projection, and went he could not see whither.

On returning to Kathleen, he found her seated as he had left her, but musing with a melancholy expression

in her sweet face, and not the least like the merry light of his life that he had so recently gazed on.

"Oh, George," she exclaimed, "that was *a warning cry!* There is more in the voice of that mighty bird than people think for. An eagle's ken, the power of his vision, his position under Heaven alone, proverb and place, assign him mysterious power. I beseech you not to kill him, let *me* ask it as a favour at your hands. Spare him for my sake; I am sure there was warning in that cry!"

"Well, then, Kathleen mavourneen, *then there was* a sort of warning," returned George, impressed by all he had seen and heard. "Some one had climbed the face of these rocks by which we are surrounded—some cragsman used to the cliffs in search of the eggs of the gulls and puffins. The eagle saw him first, and then I saw him making all haste to get away. He may have heard our conversation; but if he has, nothing that I know of in the short time that intervenes can come between me and the possession, in the light of Heaven, of all I hold dear. A possession no longer in secret will be mine, but avowed in the eyes of the living world."

"George, dearest George," replied Kathleen, pressing her sweet cheek to his broad breast, "what will to-morrow bring? Who can tell?"

"What *will* it—*shall* it bring, my own dear darling? It shall bring us to each other, it shall be the stepping-stone to a better life; to you, to love, to me, and, in

the face of the world, I will call you my own. Banish all doubt and hesitation; let not the shriek of a wild bird, or the attempted presence of an eavesdropper, mar the bliss prospective of this happy eve. Cheer up, my own sweet love. Alas! guardian as I am of all your interests, and bound in duty to forget every selfish wish of my own, I am constrained to tell you *the time has come when we must part.* You must hasten home at your accustomed hour to avoid suspicion of any kind, while I go to arrange all things in your service to-morrow. Come, then, my own sweetest love, let me lead you down the rugged path that for the minute lies before us; that accomplished, you are safe for another night in your adopted home, and then, and then,—Hark! again the distant shriek of *our* eagle,—and then, my love, *you will be where none shall vex you more!*"

Thus saying, George Ritman led the Colleen Rhue down the face of the rocks, parted from her with a long, long kiss, as if his lips were loth to leave such sweet possession; and when he saw her fairly on her way to her home, he sought his hut to carry out all arrangements for *the morrow.*

The remainder of that afternoon and evening was spent by George Ritman in making arrangements for the next morning; when, having some business to transact near the police barrack, though late at night, he saw the chief constable and his men getting under

arms, and, as he passed the window of the barracks, he heard sobs and moaning cries of a voice that seemed familiar to his ear.

Going up to one of the constables in some anxiety, he asked what was the matter.

"One of the notices, sir, due at Patrickmass, has been fulfilled. Mr. Curly's house, early in the night, has been entered by four men; they robbed the house of over a hundred pounds in money, and have carried off Kathleen Curly. We are ordered to the scene of the outrage now, and some of our men are gone on."

Poor George Ritman heard no more, but with the speed of a deer he crossed the country till he came on a scene now so fearfully desolate that his senses reeled and he almost fell to the ground. There was no one there. Curly, who had accompanied his wife to the police barrack, and who had subsequently started in pursuit with some of the constables, either led away by further intelligence, or from some cause or other, had not returned to the scene of his losses; and George Ritman stood there alone, in silence doubly still, for on that spot, when last there, but a few short hours ago, he had heard, to him, the sweetest, merriest toned voice that ever sounded in his ear, speak to him in tones of welcome and of love. Where, where was that dear girl now? Was she crying to him and on Heaven for protection against her brutal assailants dragging her away, while he, utterly incapable of answering to

her call, or of avenging her abduction, was chained by distance from raising an arm in her defence. The thought to him was so horrible as to the probable fate of the loved form, that when Curly and the police arrived, he was verging on furious insanity; so much so, that the humane chief of the police quietly ordered two of his men to keep near the raving and disconsolate lover.

To the searching inquiries made by the chief of constabulary, the evidence of Mrs. Curly went to show that the party only consisted of four men, who, as far as she knew, were utter strangers to her. She said that her daughter Kathleen did not know any of them, though she told them she did, in order to deter them and scare them from the outrage.

Every precaution was then taken to keep the ground around the house untrampled on in order that a close investigation might be made as to any footprints or signs of any kind that might afford a clue to detection; but all care, all inspection, was utterly in vain,—there were no strange footmarks, no footprints. The villains in all probability had tied a brush of heather under their boots or shoes—a common device to obliterate the impressions of nails or to prevent any marks whatever.

There was absolutely nothing to lead to anything like detection. All the footprints that could be discovered were those of Kathleen's little feet, dug deep into the soil as if in resistance.

The government, as well as the resident gentry, offered a large reward for the apprehension of the villains, but without effect. Not a word of information touching the matter could be procured; the tongues of the whole neighbourhood were villanously tied, in all probability, through fear. And at once two things were very evident: either in so terrible an extremity as this the priests *had not* a vestige of *real power* over those they called their flock, *or*, if they had a power, even on an occurrence so dishonest and vile they either dared not, or they thought it "inexpedient" to put it in force.

After exerting themselves to the very utmost, the chief of the constabulary and his men gave up the task. Not even a rumour was breathed that could lead to elucidation; and the affair, horrible as it was—the robbery of bank-notes being the least part of it, the brutal abduction of a beautiful girl, perhaps for the worst of purposes, being the heartrending gist of the affair—relapsed at last into a sort of nine days' wonder. The hope existed in some men's minds,—and what a wretched "hope" it was,—that poor Kathleen had been taken away and murdered on account of her having said she knew some of the robbers, and that thus she had escaped a still worse fate in being kept to minister to the brutal passions of her captors.

People hugged themselves on this cold comfort, but there were two who roamed the site of these occur-

rences like ghosts fabulously haunting the scene of their miseries. They never approached each other, came together, or seemed to have an united purpose; and yet their restless and unrelenting researches sprung from the same cause, from their love of the same lost object. They were the successful lover, George Ritman, and the discarded lover, Corny Lynch. They haunted each hill and dale, each moor and bog, each mountain, and each rock and tide-washed cliff, as if to meet with, to find they knew not what. If they saw each other, they avoided a meeting; till Time, that healer of all human ills, came to the relief of poor Corny Lynch, and he once again resolved into commonplace, every-day life and labour, took to a double measure of whiskey, and though his companions said he was never known to laugh again, he dug his praties with some zest, and seemed likely to find another Kathleen, whose Christian name was Bess.

Not so with George Ritman. Every tree, rock, moor, or lake, strand or mountain, that he had seen *with* her, could long *with* him *for her still.* She smiled in every sun or moon beam, and seemed to sigh to him and for him in the scents of every flower. Each sweet on the ambient air was a language from her lip, and her presence to him still peopled the living world.

Time could sweep no obliterating hand over his love, but Time, for all that, asserted a prerogative in blunt-

ing the edge of grief; and so, by degrees, George's misery sobered down to a dogged and sombre resolution never to leave the spot until the murderer or the abductor of Kathleen was discovered. To while away the time, he followed his former sports with Neptune and his gun, and the greater the solitude, and the wilder the scene of his exploits, the better he loved to pursue them.

He found, too, that to have some difficult object to attain to, was of service to him in taking his mind from melancholy retrospection. There was a large old seal, grown grey from his long amphibious life, who for years had bid defiance to all pursuers; and this seal when sitting as if disconsolately on the shore of the moving, mysterious, and moaning sea, as it searched the surrounding caverns in the rocks, he had often watched, and thus became conversant with its habits.

On this patriarch of the deep he set his heart as an antagonist worthy of his prowess, and set about planning his destruction. To arrive at this sporting finish, George was constantly on the sea shore, and going down there on one occasion with his servant, in passing a snug little creek between sufficiently projecting rocks, he came on a remarkably well-built boat, much better built than the average boats in that locality, and observing that she was of so serviceable a nature, he thought she might be of use to him in his seal-hunting if he could hire her, so he examined her fore and aft;

he walked round her three or four times, feeling her timbers and examining her, taking notice that she had a broad, white streak under the gunwale, and "Patrick and Michael Mallon" painted in large letters on her stern-board, and the word "owners" in smaller letters beneath. George praised her build and serviceable character very much to his servant, and they continued their walk along the beach.

The tide was running out very fast, and George remarked that, "In about an hour it would be just in time for the seals; so they would lie by in the furze brake till the right time of tide."

George had then sat in the brake for about half an hour, when three men came down to the boat he had so lately examined, launched her, and pulled out for the deep blue sea. He was glad as to the direction they took, as, had they gone on another tack they might have disturbed the seals, and then he thought no more of it.

A deep and rapid channel, about eighty or a hundred yards broad, swept round the far part of the strand from the right, and then ran parallel to the shore some distance out, where it joined the deep, deep sea at the near end of a very high ridge of rocks. When the tide was fairly out, the seals used to come to bask on the far bank, which was much higher than that on the near side, and from its situation caught every blink or ray of the sun that shone at this early season of the

year. They were very wary, and the old grey seal seemed to have every other seal in his charge. If he put his head up, with his dark, splendid eyes wide open, his juniors, or his wives and daughters, whichever they were, did the same; and if he showed a symptom of sculling himself with his huge rear propellers, off the rock into the deep, all the rest scuttled away at once, their panic increasing his wildness, and all hope of a shot at them was gone. George Ritman waited till the receding tide permitted him to reach a rock within one hundred and twenty yards of the basking bank of the seals; when having ordered his servant to lie in ambush on dry land, he took up his position. The sun being well out and shining on the bank, there was little doubt as to the advance of the game.

In about an hour after he had reached his somewhat aqueous ambush,—for the rock behind which he knelt was imbedded in a sort of quicksand, whence his knees disturbed a host of infant crabs, who hastened off in sidelong terror to gain the beaded, long, soft, fresh-smelling, black weeds, that hung from the edges of the rock and gave them shelter,—he saw emerge suddenly from the water near the bank a large, round forehead, shining dark and sleek. The head turned to all the points of the compass to see if an enemy was nigh; but, having ascertained no sign of danger, the head approached nearer to the bank, and the large,

old leading seal, with his grey muzzle, drew himself out of water, closely followed by four or five others of less calibre, one of whom seemed inclined to repose himself between the rifle and the desired patriarch; however, when they had comfortably arranged themselves, the younger seals lowered their heads, but their leader remained with his bolt upright, as if he was not quite satisfied that all things were on the square. "Now then," said George, to himself, "is my time:" so, sliding his rolled up glove beneath the barrel of his rifle, to prevent its concussion on the naked and rebounding rock, which gave him a rest, and to avert the natural consequences of a fire on hard stone which would have been to cant the ball many degrees higher than the aim, George pulled the trigger, heard the "tell" of the ball, and saw the huge seal roll over, while his companions scuttled into the sea. Luckily, as far as regarded possession of the seal, the ball had divided the spine behind the head, at once depriving the seal of sense and power of voluntary action, so that all the seal did was to flounder about, going seaward only so far as the incline of the bank accorded with that direction. George's servant then came running up, and, having partly divested himself of his clothing, he cried out,—

"Sir, make in, if he gets to the channel he'll sink, and we shall not get him. He's floundering like mad."

In then went master and man, and, seizing the old sea

god by his propellers, they hauled him up high and dry, and administering to the dying creature a smart blow on the head, they put him out of all further misery, and took measures to haul him in above high-water mark.

Aid from the mainland having been procured, the giant old grey seal was taken in triumph, high and dry, and then slung on a pole and carried by relays of the peasantry up to the door of George Ritman's lodgings, where it was skinned, and all sorts of experiments had resort to to express the oil. "Augh, by my soul, then the pegs came in for the beggest share."

In sports, and in such occupations as the seal and fowl afforded, George Ritman seemed to seek a temporary relief from what was really laying so heavily on his heart; but though constant exercise and active occupation deadened the pain, when muscular motion ceased, and the thought of the moment was over, there came back the dreary, undying prayer of his inner life, —of his immortal soul,—that under some dispensation of heaven he might be led up to the spot of poor Kathleen's concealment, or into the detested presence of her murderers, to restore her to her home or to avenge with his own hand the life blood that had so cruelly been taken away.

The ways of Heaven are inscrutable, often,—tardy in their action though they sometimes seem,—they lead at last directly to the point; and that finger of Omnipotence so often quoted as stretched in the right

direction, in all its majesty of silence and supremity of right, sets its impossible-to-be-obliterated seal on the envelope of guilt, and leaves to man to read the writing that bears in its graven character condemnation without the possibility of escape.

As if such thoughts as these perpetually dwelt in George Ritman's mind, nothing could induce him to leave the scene, once so exquisitely charming to him from the presence of his beautiful Kathleen, his poor lost Kathleen, his Kathleen now to him no more. From the beetling top of the highest cliff or rock, overhanging the salt sea wave, he had looked up higher still and even prayed for some direction from Heaven. He had gazed down into the whirling eddies of the dark blue pool, and tried fathoms deep to wrench from the mysterious tide some clue to the place of his Kathleen's imprisonment or death. But all in vain, and yet something seemed to bind him to the spot, some still whisper from within, sleeping and waking, bade him not to go, and thus he remained week after week day by day near to the scene of desolation, captivity, or death, and there we must still follow his adventures.

The seals that he had not killed had become so wary that they no longer afforded him a relaxation from that which lay so heavy upon his heart, the wild fowl had left the shores, and complaints were now made to him of the ravages of an eagle whose solitary eyry or resting place was in a small ledge of rock on the

impossible-to-be-reached summit of a lofty crag, that overhung an ocean channel down which the receding tides ran with an overwhelming velocity. Nearly opposite to this stupendous rocky cliff, was a low dark and solitary island of not many acres in extent, and covered chiefly with gorse and heather, and here and there a little stunted brushwood that grew on the margin and clung to the course of a little spring that afforded to the two or three cabins and their inmates that were on the island a supply of fresh water.

Immediately under but a little to the left looking from the eagle's eyry to the island, were some black weed-covered large rocks standing out in the tide, this barrier formed an obstacle to the race, and shot it off to the island, and behind the backs of these rocks there was formed a little bay so still and deep that the country people used to affirm that it had no bottom.

In accordance with the entreaties of all the farmers on the mainland, on whose lambs the eagle committed great havoc, George Ritman consented to attempt the destruction of the stately bird; and as the eagle seemed possessed not only of the keenest vision but also to be imbued with a caution amounting to reason, George Ritman knew that success could only hinge on the most elaborately considered precautions. Under this idea he set about making himself acquainted with the habits of the monarch of the air, and with the localities attached to the inaccessible rock of his resort.

It must not be supposed that George Ritman had for one moment forgotten the request of his worshipped "Colleen Rhue," that *he would spare* the eagle they had seen in happier hours *for her sake.* Those words so strangely spoken dwelt in his mind now. But if that eagle had been regarded by her as a creature connected with her safety, had she not been *deceived in her expectation,* or was not the bird *unfaithful to his trust,* and utterly *useless in her interests?* True, the eagle had warned them of some eavesdropper at their interview in the rocks as previously described, but since then his mighty wings had soared over that little portion of the world regardless of Kathleen's safety, and, as it seemed, in careless ignorance of her dreadful fate.

The bird, then, in George Ritman's mind deserved the punishment of death for his neglect; and on this consideration, he resolved to acquiesce in the entreaty of the farmers and to destroy the ravager of their folds.

Day by day high up in the blue ether, and early in the month of April, when the morning air still owned the presence of the mist of frost, the graceful form of the eagle could be seen with his motionless wings, apparently free from muscular effort as from noise, supporting him in graceful circles, at times haunted by two black specks, the forms of crows who ascended to that to them unwonted height, to mock at the majesty that would not stoop or swoop to notice their carrion insolence.

They knew the eagle did not care to kill them, and thus like other base-born things, they became loud in their clamorous abuse and safe beneath the protecting shadow of contempt.

George Ritman, then, in spite of himself became interested in killing this noble bird, urged on to it by all the proprietors and tenant farmers for many miles round. So, prone to sport as he was, he set about watching the habits of the eagle, and to ascertain if there was any available spot in the mountain to which he could reach within rifle-distance of the ledge where the eagle always rested, and in which he could lie in so complete an ambush that even the *keenest eye of all should be deceived.*

There was a small farmer, named McCormick, resided on the lowest slope of the mountain next the sea, and to him George repaired for further information.

"Have you ever observed the eagle," asked George, "that haunts this mountain?"

"Och, yer honour, it's the like of me that's done it often. He comes every year about the same time, the end of March, or the first week in April, yer honour, and here he always stays the whole summer."

From this time for several days from the opposite side of the bay, telescope in hand, George Ritman watched his intended victim in his graceful gyrations high in air, far, far above the mountain top, with

majesty in every sweep and movement. Having thus exercised his wings and piercing ken, the bird would then descend to his favourite ledge on the summit of the beetling rock and sit for hours pluming his feathers for a longer and more active flight when he went to fetch his dinner from the sheepfold which he had marked for the scene of that day's depredation. After putting his plumes in order, he would sit still as the rock itself, a statue of the noble bird he really was, and yet alive in eye and thought to noise or stir of any kind, however distant, that gave warning of molestation or danger of any kind.

Several times had George Ritman essayed to approach within rifle-shot of the eagle when seated on his lofty pedestal by crawling through the heather, and moving only inch by inch, as it were, so to avoid all sudden motion calculated to attract attention, but in vain. No sooner had his attempted approach commenced, than the eagle, without even seeming to look at him, glided smoothly and slowly off into the air, and again swept through surrounding and illimitable space the lord of the feathered creation and free to all he saw.

By constant observation George observed that when the eagle in the first grey dawn of morn left his ledge of rock, he remained absent and out of sight for about two hours, and then returning at the end of that time he took two or three circles in the air of about

four or five hundred yards in circumference, evidently to examine if all was as safe as he had left it, and then again seated himself to rest. George therefore resolved to be half way up the mountain long before daylight, and thence to watch the eagle's departure across the bay, as that was the line of his usual flight to get his breakfast; and when the unsuspecting bird was clean gone, to hurry on to the selected point for a shot, there to lie down and await the return of the doomed victim. To make his ambush the more imperviable to the eagle eye, when he should reach his post, George thatched his cap with heather, and having taken his servant with him, he ordered him, when they had gained the spot, to pluck the ling and completely cover him over with it: that done, the man was to go home and leave him for the expected shot.

Half way up the mountain, then, on a beautifully still clear April morning, when the hitherto slumbering eye of verdure was beginning to wake from the chill dreams of winter, and to peep from the warming quilt of never-dying spring to see in what sheltered nook the first budding harbinger of her return should appear, George Ritman, rifle in hand, was ensconced. He well knew that "Corrig a Ree's" departure had not yet been taken, for he never failed to announce his early flight by one loud, shrill scream, such only as can come from the powerful beak and lungs of an eagle, and which wild yell rang through every valley, and was echoed

back, and back again by mountain rock and cavern, till in exhausted echo it seemed to die away.

Day soon began to dawn; the pale green curtain of the east was lightly tinged with violet, and then the rose put in a warmer tint, which brightened every second. George raised his glass, and whispered to his servant, "We are all right; I make him out, seated still as a statue, on his ledge! He's off—there's a scream—how shrill and startling! Now's our time, or it will be when he's across the bay; but no, that scream! He's *not* off," exclaimed George, again appealing to his glass; "he's still on the rock, as still as death itself. What does that mean? Hark! I hear the rowlocks of a boat behind those lower rocks; what can a boat have been doing there at this hour? whisky, I suspect. That eagle at first saw more than we did, he must have observed the boat: he keeps his place rather than float in his airy ocean over men upon the water. What smuggling trick have they been up to? There's the boat come into view now with three men in her, and they pull straight for the island strand. It's the boat I looked at in the creek between the rocks; I make out the white streak beneath her gunwale. I see the big letters 'P' and 'M' on her stern-board quite plain. The eagle must have shrieked that dreadful scream, as a warning that he saw his enemy, man, out on some deed before him. He's off *now* in earnest, there's his shriek again; there he goes across the bay, and *now*

my time is come at last! Follow to the place where I shall lie down concealed, cover me up, and then be off." The spot was soon reached, and George, lying on his breast, his eyes directed to the ledge of rock, was speedily ensconced and completely covered up in heather.

The servant then returned to his lodgings; and for nearly two hours George lay thus concealed, the rising sun lighting up each peak of rock above him, and glittering in unclouded grandeur on the broad ocean billows far below, as if grasping in his brilliant hands all things on earth and water, and rescuing the world from shade. This grand scene before him, one would have thought that, with the light and freshly bracing morning air, the spirit of man in his early manhood, would have risen with the day, but so it was not with George. A chill seemed suddenly to creep around his heart, all things in aspect changed; his uncontrollable thoughts reverted to the probable fate of Kathleen, and, strange to say, to the first shriek of the eagle, and then he thought how gladly he would give up not only all the triumphs of a sportsman's life, but even life itself, could he but restore his beautiful, his winning, sweet, his gentle Kathleen, whose love he knew he had, to her home, and avenge her abduction, or still more dreadful thought, the outrage upon her, and *her murder*. Could he but have heard her prayers for aid, could he but have heard a *warning cry* to tell him of the loved one's danger, and to bring him to her

side in time, far or near, he would have flown to her rescue, and saved her from perdition. Strange as it may seem, the first shrill shriek from the eagle that morning, forced itself again and again on his mind, rang in his ears, softened his heart, and called to his remembrance her request, "that he would not kill the bird;" but what had the bird now to do with Kathleen? A crushing feeling of despondence then came over him, weighed on his heart, and depressed his spirit, till he burst into an agony of tears. Wondering at his own weakness, he had scarcely dashed his hand across his eyes, to clear the last tear away, when he was suddenly aware of, or rather he felt that a large black shadow passed over and around him, and then the slow heavy flap of the eagle's enormous wings, the only time they make any noise is when the bird brings himself up from flight or hastily commences it; and there, on the ledge of rock, sat the lately so much coveted quarry, motionless and all unsuspicious of danger. The eagle's breast was towards his ambushed foe; and as he turned his beautifully shaped head, George could even see the golden circle around his piercing eye. The once longed-for moment had arrived, the sight of the ready rifle rested on the mark, the mottled feathers, with their yellow, brown and black stripes, seemed to envelope the rifle's muzzle, the least touch of the finger, and the once coveted deed was done; but in a sudden tremor, for which

there was no possibility of accounting, the scream, the first unearthly scream of the morning, seemed again to ring in George's ears, and casting the rifle from him, he sprung to his feet with a cry of horror, when the startled eagle, almost pausing to fix on him one piercing, steadfast look, plunged into the bright, elastic, sunny air, and glided from his mountain throne, disturbed, but apparently not scared, by the danger of the hour.

What more had that eagle to do with the nerves of George Ritman, than the poor unoffending monster seal, whose death George had so lately gloried over. The one was as free a denizen of the wide ocean, as the other was monarch of the air, and the former, the seal, was the most unoffending and innocent of the two. The one was slain in the harmless enjoyment of a bask in the sun, without one sentiment of pity or remorse; while the tyrant of the lambing-fold was permitted to fly in safety, his talons stained with blood, away, when within the reach of the same rifle that had sealed the phoca's doom. What was there to account for this inconsistency in man? Could *mortal reason* account for it? might not that previously alluded *to unerring finger of God, have given a direction to the inner life* of man, and to his desires, and to the heaven-ward wing of the eagle as well, while it stayed the deadly aim from harming *Heaven's messenger?* These are questions that *will* occur to a thinking mind. *Facts*, such as these I deal with here, but

without forestalling the interests of my tale, I must now refer the reader to subsequent chapters to elucidate the end, and to put the reader in a position to judge for himself, as to the mysterious influences brought to bear on the fate of the "Colleen Rhue" on that beautiful April morning. A morn so beautiful, that at the first blush of the rosy cast, the sins of a world might have been shamed, at least for the joyous hour, into darkness, and Ireland have been left unpolluted by outrage so horrible, as to call for *more than human reprehension.*

CHAPTER III.

After the strange occurrence narrated in the foregoing chapter, George Ritman was seized with an unaccountable depression of spirits. His bodily health was good; but there came down with leaden weight upon his mind, an incubus of ill, for which he could not account. He, so to speak, looked himself in the face, and asked himself why or wherefore this depression. What should or could make him more unhappy than he was before; and why was he unable, in all his young and muscular strength, to shake off this dark visitation, this midnight of the mind, this intangible weight on his spirit, which seemed neither to know nor to expect a sunny morrow? It is the in-

tangible ghost, "the rooted sorrow of the brain," the impossible-to-be-grappled-with horror, that is the most difficult of all man's oppressions, to be fought against; for, like the thick, cold mist that clouds the world at times, and hides the sun, it cannot be laid hold of nor rendered amenable to force.

The mists of Heaven are only dispersed in Heaven's own time, and the intangible horror of the mind has no physician but the inscrutable will of the great Creator. So depressed, so melancholy, had George Ritman at last become, that one of his sisters sought him out, and by dint of prayers and entreaties persuaded him to leave a spot fraught with melancholy recollections. What good could he achieve by staying there any longer? Not a hope was left that Kathleen would ever be seen alive again; the season of the year, too, afforded him no pursuits and sport for the occupation of his mind: so at last George Ritman and his sister left the west coast of Ireland together.

Spring continued to progress; the numberless treasures of earth, air, and water were assuming their full, sweet radiance on the rich foreground of flowers, fruits, and fish. The mountains, here and there at their foot, were decked with the golden bloom of the gorse, while their huge and heath-grown shoulders donned a pink and purple vestment, to appear before the altar of the skies as fittingly attired priests to receive the varying lights that creation vouched to give them.

It was on a warm, still summer's day that on which Corny Lynch, in company with a little niece of his, pulled across the bay, and then by the lonely island before mentioned; it being just dead low water, without difficulty he reached the lower rocks that jut out into the tide, near the foot of the eagle's mountain, and so occasion a rock-bound hole, or small bay, of very deep water, a good deal inhabited by the rock fish, for which Corny came to fish. Though this hole is always many fathoms deep, of course the depth diminishes or increases with particular times of tide; and on this day, when Corny Lynch and his little niece went there, close along beneath the margin of the rock, on the ledge at the summit of which the eagle used to rest, there were some yards of flat granite among the long, flowing, dark weeds, wherein innumerable little crabs found shelter. On this table of granite Corny Lynch landed his niece, to amuse herself with the little fish, but with strict injunctions not to go too near the edge, lest she should slip into the sea; however, as he was not going to be many yards from her in his boat, when he cast his lines, he had little fear for the child's safety.

Corny Lynch had just lowered his line, lit his short black pipe, and composed himself comfortably in the stern of his boat, feeling his line with one finger, when little Molly cried out to him,—

"Oh, uncle, uncle, here's such beautiful new weeds;

they're not on shore where I can get at them, they are growing on another bit of rock amost under water, but they well up with every little swell that comes in, or even with the motion made by your boat. They are so pretty, and so red; oh, come and pick um!"

These words, little heeded by Corny Lynch, were then followed by a cry of horror from the child.

"No, no, uncle; it ain't no weeds. Come, come, it's hair! and there's something under the hair! Oh, come, I am so frightened!"

At these fearful words, so earnest from the child, so fraught with terrible misgivings,—the colour of the supposed weeds, the hair, the hue of the hair and all—letting go his line, one paddle with an oar brought him to the spot, to see—to see what? Nothing like what he remembered to have seen in life; but still there was the deep, deep red hair—still red, though darker from being so wet; and when a beam from the noonday sun fell on it, touched by the light of heaven, it still looked as it used to look when it filled poor Corny's honest heart with unrequited admiration of its golden tints.

With features fixed as if in an adamantine palid mask of immovable horror, Corny put the blade of his oar beneath the golden hair, and lifted something like a face, and then fell back senseless in his boat, the poor child still on the rock, and the tide not far off the hour of its return.

Fresh horrors might have happened if McCormick, in looking around the foot of the mountain for a missing lamb, had not heard the screams of the child in that lone and sequestered nook of the coast. Alarming the two or three work-people on his little farm, he hastened with them to the scene near those piercing cries, and, launching his boat, he reached the spot, ascertained the cause of the cries he heard, and lifted poor Corny up from the bottom of his craft, and putting one of his own men into it, ordered him to pull in for the farm-house, and then fixed his further efforts on the terrible revelations of the sea.

It was some time before Corny Lynch came to his senses, through the aid of whisky and the kind attention of the farmer's wife; but when he did so, he sat down on a rock on the beach outside the house and watched McCormick and his men coming slowly towards him towing at the stern of the boat what, at a distance, appeared to be a mass of weeds, Corny's little niece crying all the time.

On nearing the shore, McCormick ordered his men to lie to, while calling to his wife and the man who had rowed Corny and his boat to the farm, he desired them to take Corny indoors, and entreated him to obey that suggestion.

It was in vain; the well intended act was resisted. Corny Lynch shook himself free of his kindly, endeavouring friends, and almost shrieked aloud,—

"Acht, quiet meself is it?—calm meself is it? I'm far cowlder now at the heart of me than that," pointing to the mass at the stern of the boat. "Acht, she'll forgive me if I iver tazed her with my importunities. Acushla machree! Then, as ye are now, but ye'll forgive me."

And, saying this, he sprang from his friends into the sea; when, the farmer seeing that it was no use to avoid it, he signed to his men to pull in, and Corny Lynch, springing into the craft, went aft and gazed over the stern. On what? On a shapeless mass—scarce recognisable save but by the long, luxuriant red and golden hair. And tied to what seemed to be the waist was a broken piece of rope, to which, no doubt, a weight of some sort had been appended to ensure the fate her murderers had assigned her; but which rope time, and perhaps the friction of the rocks, had severed, thus permitting a fearful fact to ascend to the light of God's blessed day—a dumb but eloquent witness to bring proof home to the wronged laws of man, and then to ask for further punishment at the bar of Heaven. The fiends—the atrocious fiends—who, in the likeness of humanity, had surpassed the author of *all* mischief in the hellish deeds of their conception, were yet to be sought out—were yet to be brought to face the [illegible] of their fellow men, and to die an ignominious death.

Poor Corny leant over the stern of the boat, and,

with his knife, cut off a lock of *her* hair, his salt tears streaming all the time into the salt sea.

We turn from a scene so sad to other things.

George Ritman, in the meantime, was moving about from place to place with his sister, still anxious, still wretched, and still desponding; when, one day in taking up the newspaper, he read the following paragraph, under the head of "Mysterious Murder:"—

"It may be in the recollection of our readers that some time in March last the house of a respectable farmer, named Denis Curly, in the western part of the country, was attacked and robbed of a large sum of money, and that on that occasion his daughter Kathleen, an interesting and pretty young girl of about nineteen or twenty years of age, was carried away, and whose fate up to the present time has been involved in mystery. On Tuesday last, however, the body of a young female was discovered floating under the high rocks that bind the sea-shore about a mile from Curly's house. A boat was procured, and the body was taken to the landing-place of the strand. Crowds immediately assembled; and the rumour quickly spread that it was the body of the unfortunate Kathleen Curly, better known as the Colleen Rhue, which turned out to be but too true."

The coroner's inquest, according to this account, then sat, and "returned a verdict of wilful murder against some person or persons unknown;" adding

"that it was much to be regretted that the belief was very generally entertained that there existed not the slightest possibility of any clue being obtained to bring home this foul and unnatural murder to the miserable perpetrators."

When George Ritman commenced reading this account of the murder he was alone at the breakfast-table; but, when his sister came in, she was astonished to see the paper, behind which her brother's face was concealed, shaking as if it would fall to pieces. Just as she entered, her brother started up, his brow flushed, and his forehead almost bursting in the large marked veins that stood out upon it. Dashing the paper down on the breakfast-table, he exclaimed, pointing with his hand to it,—

"There are two lines in that paragraph—the one cuts to my very soul to think of it, the other fills my brain with the long besought hope that, *at last*, though all too late to save her life, *I hold a clue to her murderers, and I am the one, the sole one, to bring them to justice, and to avenge her death!* No doubt but they for weeks previously to having committed the mercy of murder kept that high-minded, delicate and beautiful girl subject to their brutal passions, and then to escape conviction, threw her into the sea. I know *now* what *that shriek* preceding the yell of the eagle *was;* I know *now* why I could not shoot *that* bird, and why I threw from me the rifle loaded for his

death! Kathleen, my wronged, my loved, my lost Kathleen, to thy memory I bind myself; and surely the same mysterious power that sent the eagle to the rock to keep me watching there will still afford me, in some inscrutable way, the clue—the clue to avenge thee. But I have *that* clue; and none can take it from me or be beforehand with the glorious duty allotted, as it seems, by Heaven!"

A few words sufficed to acquaint his sister with the news; then on the instant putting himself into communication with the able chief of the constabulary, they, with as little delay as possible, met at the police barrack by the strand of that western bay; and *then*, George Ritman left the matter entirely in the hands of the chief, having first communicated all he knew, and received the chief's concurrence, that in all that he or his men did, he should be permitted to accompany them, and to aid them if required.

On his solemn word of honour to restrain every feeling he had, and to communicate and to act only as the police wished him to do, he with the chief and his constables at once took counsel as to their future proceedings.

There could be no sort of doubt but that the body of Kathleen had been found on the spot where at day break in the morning, while watching for the eagle, the well-known boat had been seen, by George Ritman and his servant, coming from, marked, as we have de-

scribed, on stern-board and gunwale, with the names of her owners, and peculiarity of paint; nor was there much doubt but that, on that occasion, the first scream so shrill, so sudden, so forlorn, but heard so far, piercing the startled air, and ascending to such a distance, was that of the poor girl when thrown into the deep pool surrounded by the lower rocks. The men in the boat, then, must have been her murderers.

"Now Healy," said the chief of the constabulary to one of his men, "there is not a moment to be lost. God grant that we may not be too late; news don't fly fast to that lonely and secluded island, but we must, if possible, avoid arousing any suspicion. Get yourselves ready, my men; you and Ferris in plain clothes, shooting-jackets and straw hats will be the thing. We'll start to-night, after dark; Mr. Ritman will go with us to point out the position he was in when he heard the cry of distress, which, at the moment, he took for the eagle's scream, and the exact 'ocality whence the boat came, after that cry was heard. Let constables Cleary, Ryan, Duggan, and Jones, be ready at the same time in uniform. Let not a syllable be breathed to the men as to the duty we are upon; that disclosure I will make at the proper time. I shall take with us the rifle and double gun. We must appear, in a boat soon after daybreak, as if we were after gulls or seals and the men in uniform will lie down in the bottom of the boat, covered over with our cloaks."

The smallest men of the force had been selected for this purpose, in order to be the more easily concealed.

The next morning, before seven o'clock, the tide answering at that time, the party, including Ritman, who had been provided with a slouching hat and rough great coat and "comforter," as it was very inaptly termed on an occasion like that, the better to disguise his well-known figure, proceeded along the shore in the direction of McCormick's house, to the end of the high ridge of rocks, where they left the men in uniform hidden, all armed as they were.

Having knocked at the door of his house,—for McCormick was not yet up,—the farmer looked from his window, and, after a cordial greeting to the chief of the police, he consented, at the request of the latter, to lend his boat.

"Many seals up, McCormick?" said the chief.

"A good many, yer honour; I'll be down directly to lend you a hand, as soon as ever I get on the toggery I won't be a minute putting on me."

"Thanks; but while you dress yourself," replied the chief, "we'll just take a turn in the bay, first; by the time we're back, you'll have your breakfast taken, and be all in all."

"Well, as you like, yer honour; you know where she, the boat, is, and the oars are in her."

Leaving McCormick to dress and get his breakfast, they then took possession of the boat, and pulled down

to where they had left the four constables, took them in, ordered them to lie down, and covered them with cloaks, so that nothing from any point of the high rocks, could be made out as to what else the boat contained, besides the shooting party, who, of course, were well confessed, gun and rifle in hand.

"All ready, sir," said Healy; "straight across for the island, I take it?"

"No, just the contrary," replied the chief. "Pull about the bay openly and carelessly, anywhere, for some time, towards the point and from the point half-a-dozen times, and fire at any gull we meet, and at nothing, now and then, if we don't see a gull. We've a full view of the island, and can see any stir about it; just do as I desire."

"Brickeens," as this piece of retired land was called, was sometimes an island and sometimes not. It was a long, narrow promontory, that ran for about a mile into the bay, parallel with the shore of the mainland, and forming a second bay about a mile and a-half across. When the tide was in, it was completely a sea-surrounded island; but at low water, there was a sort of swampy communication with the mainland, as much water and quicksand as it was earth, which looked as if, for the time, its island character was disputed. This bar, or morass, was so soft and delusive, that any person attempting to cross it, would have sunk to the arm-pits, and if not extricated by other aid, been assuredly

drowned at the return of the tide. The habitable or cultivated part consisted in an extent of about thirty acres, some part of this very green, the herbage though of the purest kind, called "bent." There were but two houses on this island, and they both belonged to the same owner. The occupants had taken possession of the island without leave, paid no rent, and were never asked for any.

"Well, sir," again broke out Healy, "if I might venture to offer advice, I'd cut straight across and into 'em at once; they can't leave the island *now*, unbeknown to us."

"True, my good man, but they *might not be on it*, and if they saw us down upon them in a way to rouse their suspicions, if they took to their boat, we should be no match for them with the oars, laden as we are too, they having perhaps a quarter of a mile start of us. No; my plan is that they, the very men we want, shall be the first to overhaul us. If they don't come, and I don't see their boat in the usual place, we'll stand off again without landing, and then return to watch."

"The chief's right by Jemeny," said Ferris; "'twould be a bad job to put them blackguards up to snuff, by making a blank offer."

"Not a doubt about it, Ferris," returned the chief; "leave it to me, and act strictly by my orders."

All this time George Ritman sat motionless as a statue in the boat, nothing moving but his eyes, which

seemed keenly to wander from the resort of the eagle, to the low, dark, black rocks, whence that awful scream had ascended to his ears, ears beneath which a heart and hand were ready to have saved her, who gave it, from any danger, could he but have been aware of the circumstances, and near enough to have made in.

At this moment, a large sea-gull winged his easy flight at some distance from the boat, and the chief fired at it, though out of distance, and then, as if occupied only in loading his gun, he took a hasty glance with his telescope, and swept the island creeks for a sight of the desired boat; it was not, however, to be seen, but, at the moment, a man came from a door in one of the houses, and passed out of sight to the rear.

"Pull away," said the chief, "farther out into the great bay, I want a view of the other side of the island."

This was done, and then again the boat was pulled to her former course; another sea-gull was fired at, and the glass used, when a second man came out of the house and joined the previous one, and then they both peeped round the corner, evidently looking at the supposed, or perhaps just then doubtful, sportsmen.

"So far, then, all right," remarked the chief, with compressed lips, "the boat *must* be at home;" and so it was; for on pulling a little farther beyond the point, there was *the* boat, name, paint, and letter, drawn up high and dry upon the strand.

The eyes of George Ritman set themselves fast upon *those* marks on *that boat*, he had last seen when it returned from that terrible spot where the body had been found, and his great coat shook with the intense and angry excitement from within. The chief looked at him and held his finger up to remind him of his pledge to quietude.

"Now, boys," continued the chief, in a concentrated tone of deep anxiety; "we'll make them acknowledge the ownership of that boat, and have them come to us. They shall admit the boat *is* theirs, and acknowledge their names, as well as ownership. Pull in, land, and get out of our boat and begin to launch theirs. We'll have some conversation ere we collar them."

A suppressed "Ay, ay, sir," was the response from the men in disguise, as well as from under the cloaks.

The orders strictly obeyed, out got the chief and his followers, leaving Ritman in the stern-sheets muffled up in his disguise; and having pulled their own boat sufficiently out of the tide's way to ensure its holding on, they commenced to push at the other boat, but not with all their might, as they wished to afford time to the owners to come and interrupt them. There, in the face of them all, were the letters sworn to by George Ritman, as painted on the craft he had seen before, as well as on that fatal morning, when, as the chief laid his hand on her, he muttered to himself. "I'll burn you to cinders before many days are over," and then, at a sign

from the chief, they apparently commenced an endeavour to launch her.

"Hallo, there," cried a tall, swarthy, ill-looking man, coming from behind the house before alluded to. "What the devil are you about, let that boat alone there, will you?

"I'm only taking the loan of her," said the chief, quietly; "I'll bring her back again."

"Auch, by Jasus! you'll just lave her where she is, if you plaze," replied the man, striding towards his unwelcome visitors in a menacing manner, "or, by the Crass o' Christ, I'll be afther the deaths of some of ye."

"No I won't," replied the chief, "she don't belong to you!"

"I say she *does* belong to me, and you won't lay a hand upon her without my lave; here, Jim Bergin come on."

"Why, what's your name?" said the chief, looking him full in the face.

"My name's 'Michael Mallon,' if yer wants to know. Divil fire that bit but it's thruth."

"Well," returned the chief, "'Pat Mallon' lent me the boat, he told me to take it when I liked, I saw him in Dromore on Sunday last."

"You're a liar," said Michael Mallon, "Pat Mallon never left the island on Sunday, and he's here to make a liar of you. You've a dam dale of impidence to come

here and take any man's boat without, 'with your lave, or by your lave.' Here Pat, come down here; where's Jim Bergin?"

Another tall rough fellow then came running down.

"Pat," said the first man, "did you ever lend this chap our boat, or tell him he might take it? he says you did."

"He says wrong then; I couldn't, I never see the man afore."

The chief then gave an agreed-on signal to Heally and Ferris, and Heally whistled for the men in the boat. At the same moment the chief and Ferris sprang upon Michael Mallon, and Heally on Pat, but ere the four constables in uniform could struggle up from the floor of the boat free of their cloaks, George Ritman, rough great coat and all, sprang like a tiger over their heads and over the boat, and seizing Pat Mallon by the throat, almost choked him.

The ruffians resisted violently, but the four constables in uniform soon put all hope of escape out of the question, and the handcuffs on, the two tall savage looking villains, stood between the police, silent and scowling, like captured beasts of prey.

Ere they were put into the boat the police tied their legs together with handkerchiefs, as the boat was so full, that a very little might have made her capsize.

This done, and the guard over them mounted, the chief said to Heally, "Who or where is this 'James

Bergin' that 'Michael Mallon' hallooed for. He must be on the island, and we want *the third man*. There were three in the boat the morning of the murder; out with your glass and sweep every corner around. By Jove, I have him, or somebody else! yonder's a man down by the swamp, I don't make him out now, I thought I did; surely it was the figure of a man! Away then, at all events we'll search the spot."

Off the chief and two of his men started, leaving George Ritman, glaring at the murderers, as if he longed at once to put them to death; and when the chief and his men came to where the glass had, as he supposed, deceived him, they set about making a close search.

"Hallo," suddenly exclaimed the chief, stumbling over a large substance beneath some cut whins, "get up, my man, what do you do there?" And saying this he pulled the ambushed man from among the cut whin by the collar.

He was a young fellow about one or two and twenty, with black curly hair and a deeply pock-marked face, snub nose, no whiskers and a very wide mouth. He made no resistance whatever, but was alone remarkable for his ugliness. In height about five feet five, a huge head, and ears that stuck out the size of tea saucers; in addition to the very large head, he was immensely stout; in short a more ungainly-looking creature could not exist.

No sooner had the chief pulled this fellow to his feet, than in a whining voice he cried,—

"Och sir, yer honour, I could not help it; I'll tell you every ha'porth I knows *about it,* good or bad, may I sup sorrow for it if I don't."

"No," said the chief, sternly, "tell me nothing at all, I don't want you to tell me anything, and the best thing you can do is to hold your tongue."

"Och sir, yer honour, I couldn't help it, 'deed I couldn't, I tells you all I knows, may I be roasted on red hot iron iv I don't."

"No, none of that, the more you tell me the worse it may be for you; I order you to hold your tongue."

"Och, but I must spake out," (there was no stopping him). "You'll find Curly's gun in the stack of furze behind the house, and they hould the most of the money still. I doesn't know where they kapes it, but it's about the bed. If you can find an ould tin canister it's apt to be in it." In spite of all the signs the chief could make he went on with a wild rapidity.

"Och, it isn't me that's *quite innocent of the murther* like, but by dad to the sorrows of the like of me I was *about* the money; it's no use telling your honour lies, I'm a bloody tief, but not so bad as t'others.

Thus he kept on while they marched him off in handcuffs to the boat, then they tied his legs for the passage across the water, and when put alongside the other prisoners he was silent as the grave; in fact, half

idiot and whole knave as he looked, it was very evident he knew when and where to hold his tongue.

The chief, accompanied by George Ritman, then repaired to the cabins and commenced a vigilant search throughout; the fact was that the chief did not like to lose sight of George Ritman, fearing that he might become a prey to some ungovernable fury, and seek to wreak summary vengeance on the prisoners.

The very first thing that the police took down from a nail in an inside room was a dark plaid cloak, and from behind the door a straw bonnet.

They were those which poor Kathleen had worn when last in company with George Ritman, when happy in each other's love the eagle had sailed close over their heads, George but lamenting that he had not got his gun. The chief saw how much his companion was affected, and had he not kindly taken him by the arm he might have fallen. Ordering his men to search closely, he led George from the cabin, and, when they were seated on a little bench outside, the chief was very glad to see that poor George Ritman put his hands before his face, and faintly murmuring something as to the bonnet and cloak, yielded to an agonised burst of tears.

Having elicited an assurance that he would remain there till his return, the chief joined his men; and, on ripping open the bolster of the bed in the same room, an old tin canister was discovered, containing sixty-two

pounds in bank-notes. No box, no other clothes, could be discovered, though both had been carried off from Curly's house; but in the furze-stack was found his gun. The only living thing in the house was a very old crone, who pretended to be stone-deaf; half blind she certainly was; but not wishing at present to be hampered with such an appendage, the chief left the old woman rocking herself over the embers of a fire, and purring like a cat, but not in a happy way.

As they left the house, the chief paused, and said to his men,—

"There was a fourth man in the robbery of Curly's house, and at all events in the abduction of the girl. We have not done yet. What is that building further away here, on the island? We'll search that. It looks uninhabited; but who can tell?"

Thus saying, he led the way to the spot he alluded to. The chief and Heally proceeded there together, and a more desolate place could not be imagined; however, it was inhabited, for on entering the dilapidated hut, they found a middle-aged, very unhappy-looking woman seated over the ashes of a drooping fire, with three squalid children playing on the floor. On seeing these, the constables commenced their search.

"Gintlemen," the woman said, "you'll find nothing here, thanks be to God. Oh, how I wishes that you had come months ago! That would have saved *him;*

and you'd have done some good. God help 'em! 'tis well for them that they have neither kith nor kin belonging to them, but that poor old woman! and sure she'll be in her clay afore the month's out, now that they are taken. The Lord between us and harm this day."

To make a long story as short as possible, this woman was the wife of the fourth man at the robbery of Curly's house; but he having received his share of the plunder,—thirty-four pounds,—had started off that instant to America, whither he had promised to send for his wife and children. But no symptoms had yet occurred of his keeping his promise. He was a first cousin of the Mallons, and the old deaf woman at their house was his mother.

Content with his capture of the three men, and the local confirmation of their guilt, the chief then conveyed his prisoners and their boat across the bay to McCormick's creek; and the surprise and joy of the latter, when he found that the murderers of poor Kathleen Curly were in custody, knew no bounds. The news ran like wildfire through the country-side; and the people did all they could to promote any wishes the chief of the constabulary might have, for there was a very strong feeling among the poor, as well as rich, in regard to the perpetrators of the hellish deed.

Leaving the prisoners and the captured boat at the police-station at Screen, the chief borrowed a horse—

there were several offered to him by the people—and rode at once to the house of "the colonel," who was a magistrate, to prepare him for the advent of the prisoners who were being conveyed to his presence.

"Well," said the colonel, who had been deeply affected by the report, "you know the large sum I bound myself to pay for information that would lead to conviction; you know, too, that I have doubled that sum, since the poor girl's body has been found. Whoever gave you the information shall have it, every penny. Knowing as you do how I was circumstanced towards her, you can imagine the grief I have been in. The money, however, shall go to the informer, whether accomplice or not, every farthing of it."

"There is no informer, sir: at least, no person entitled to it through treachery. It has been found out through the direct manifestation of Providence, or something very like it."

The chief then narrated the circumstances, to which the colonel anxiously listened, exclaiming,—

"Then that young gentleman, I hope, will take the reward; though perhaps he'll be offended at the idea. At all events, I'll lodge the money at the bank to your credit, and you must use it as you can, or do as you like with it."

At that moment, the sound of a horse's feet came to the door, when the colonel, without looking from the window, turned to the chief constable, and said,—

"You must not bring the prisoners before me, circumstanced as I was to the poor girl. I will not act. You must take them at once before some other justice. I wish you had not brought them here at all."

"They are not here, sir," replied the chief; "I ordered my men to stop at the outer lodge until I knew your wishes. The horse's feet you heard is one ridden by a constable simply to say that the prisoners have come."

The chief then left the colonel to proceed to another justice; but scarcely had he turned from the gate at the head of the avenue when he heard a step behind him; there was poor Corny Lynch, streaming with perspiration, and trailing behind him in the dust a long, black, hemp rope, three yards in length.

It was frightful to see his insane look and state of ungovernable excitement. Striking the chief a heavy blow between the shoulders with his open hand, he exclaimed,—

"You have *them* at last! and, by me soul, there's nothing you can ever ask of me, that's Corny Lynch, that I won't do for you."

"Then you'll mind what I say?"

"Och, be dad! that I will. But now I'll jest go on and spake to 'em—wish 'em joy, yer honour. And, blood and oons! I'll show 'em this," (giving the rope a shake,) "and drag it afore them all the way; 'tis stout enough to swing 'em all!"

"You'll do no such thing," said the chief, seizing the rope. "You've sworn to obey me, and you *must* do so. Corny Lynch, give the rope to me; I must and will have it."

Corny Lynch looked him hard in the face a moment, and then threw the rope at him.

"There, take it, sir. I'd cry with grief, but joy has mastered it. I never shall forget what you have done. Och, the murthering villains! they'll sup sorrow for it!"

At this juncture, the chief threw the rope over the hedge, begging of Corny to return to his mother. Seeing that he was still trembling with angry excitement, he urged, prayed, and commanded Corny to go home; but to no purpose. Corny declared nothing should prevent him walking side by side with the prisoners, the whole way. It was repayment for his pain to see them handcuffed and captured, and to know that every step they made took them nearer, "och, be dad! to the divil."

At this episode of his temporary insanity, a new thought seemed to strike him; and suddenly jumping over the hedge, he repossessed himself of the rope, and, twisting it up into a small coil,—

"This," he said, to the chief, "I cannot altogether give up. I'll secure it at the gate-house until I come back. 'Tis not the only remembrance of death that I have of me poor Kathleen. She wouldn't give me a lock of her hair, with a toss of her poor little head, it warn't

for the like 'o me! But, see here," taking a paper from his bosom; "here it is though: I've got the treasure now. *This*," throwing the coil of rope into the air like a lasso. "By our blessed lady! call not Cornelius Lynch a man if he does not manage that it shall hang one at least of the Mallons, that black, hang-dog, curly-headed villain!"

Poor, half-crazed Corny Lynch! He had possessed himself of the actual piece of rope that had probably dragged the idol of his heart to her grave, down, down, into the depths of the sea. Poor fellow! He walked by the side of the prisoners, and it was as much as the chief could do to repress the "ridiculous," which ever treads so closely "on the heels of the sublime," emanating from the words and gestures of the unhappy man. The end of all things must come! The depositions of Curly and his wife were taken, along with those that proved the finding of the body, and identification. Cloak, bonnet, gun, and money, and evidence as to the boat, were produced, and the three prisoners fully committed for trial.

We must now pass over the intervening months, until the second of March in the following year, at which period the assizes were held.

At the bar stood the two tall, ill-looking "Mallons;" but where was "Jamesey Bergin?" *There had been no hesitation in admitting him "King's evidence."*

I will not tire my readers by recapitulating all

the evidence in this extraordinary case; but will simply take that of the approver Bergin, as the narration given was curious, as well as peculiar in his replies to the cross-examining counsel for the defence.

The approver proceeded to state, among other things, that,—

"On the night of the 17th of March last, the prisoners and Francis Fechily, who was not now in this country, and himself, came across in a boat to the mainland. The boat belonged to the prisoners, and their names were painted on her. When we landed," continued the witness, "we proceeded to the house of Denis Curly, for the purpose of robbing it. Francis Fechily——"

Here the leading counsel for the defence rose, and stopped the witness.

"Francis Fechily, my lud, is not amenable. You, witness, therefore must not mention his name again."

"I can't tell my story," replied the witness, "unless I *do* mention his name. But, arrah! that's no great matter, for you'll niver set yer eyes on him agin."

"I *never* saw him, sir," replied the counsel, "and, therefore, I cannot see him *again*. I care not where he is, but you must not mention his name again. He is not before the court, so you must manage somehow to tell your story without him. Be cautious, sir, and mind what you say."

"Very well, yer honour," replied the witness. "I didn't know the differ; I'll thry to do without him. *T'other man*, then, and one of the prisoners had been ashore a couple of days afore, and said when they came back, that Curly was *quilling* heifers for the fair of Banada for the 17th, and that if they were worth a damn, they could make a good haul of it the fair night. 'Twas he, Pat Mallon, proposed this. We agreed to thry it, and came to the house some time ayont midnight. We first went to the barn, where Fran—— Augh, be dad! that's wrong—'t'other man' said the servant-boy slept, and we tight-hasped the door to keep him in. We then went to the dwelling-house, and Michael Mallon, that's he, knocked at the door, and said we was the police, and asked to be let in from the rain, to smoke our pipes till the shower was over. Misther Curly gets up, opens the door, and says, says he, 'Come in, and welcome, boys.' That's all he could say, for he was then knocked down agin the opposite wall. It was one of the prisoners who struck the blow; but, being ahint, I was not sure which. Fran—hello, be gorra! that's not it—'t'other man' was ahint the prisoners and before me, so I could not see distinctly. T'other man lit a candle, and Pat Mallon took down a gun which was hanging beside the dresser." (Gun produced.) "They then went into an inside room, and searching, found a desk, which he, the prisoner, Pat Mallon, broke open,

and took out a large bundle of bank-notes, and a trifle of silver." (Bank-notes produced.) "Knew the deceased, Kathleen Curly, but not before that night. She was in the house, and, be dad! just about resolute in trying to save the money. She got several 'pushes,' as did Mr. and Mrs. Curly, when they tried to save the desk. Michael Mallon called out to Pat 'not to hurt the girl if he could help it.' They hit Denis Curly another blow about this time, which staggered him; so Kathleen saized the poker and fetched Pat Mallon such a crack over the head as hit him down on his face and knees; but the Curlys couldn't kape the money. They then locked Curly and his wife into a room, but Kathleen had got to the door, and was standing outside with the poker. She said she would not let them out but with her life, that she knew two of them, and would be afther a prosecution. Michael whispered to Pat and 't'other man' that it would be the safest way to carry her clane off, and well worth the trouble too. They then together ran in upon her, saized her, and tied a handkerchief over her mouth and her hands behind her back. All this time Denis Curly and his wife were begging for mercy on her, and offering to say nothing anent the money if they would spare the girl. He swore by his Maker and the Blessed Virgin that if they spared the girl he would not prosecute, but Michael Mallon said, 'That be damned! if he didn't prosecute, his wife

would ; so come, boys, away with her.' They then proceeded to drag her away, when a small girl who was crying in the house called out, 'oh, give her her bonnet and cloak, here they are.'" (Both produced.) "So I went in and fetched them, and Michael Mallon threw the cloak on her shoulders and tied on her bonnet. On leaving the house, Pat Mallon hasped the door on the outside and put a padlock on it to prevent pursuit. They then dragged Kathleen Curly along, for she would not use her feet to walk, lifted her into the boat, and rowed across to the island. My conscience," said the witness, "began to smite me on the way from the house to the boat, from the manner in which the girl struggled to get free ; and 'twas bad —och ! mighty onasey—to see her little feet a-dragging afther her, or a-sticking out in front to prevent her going. There, your mighty judgeship, if I had dared to go, and could have bolted off, I'd have cut the whole consarn wid a hurra, and gone and tould the police. Howsever, yer honours, I couldn't get away, for Fran—'t'other man,' I should say—he always walked close ahint me, as if he'd some suspicion, and there was no slipping off to begone entirely. They kept Kathleen on the island for a length of time, making her obey her captors up to the very day they murthered her. They kept her locked up except when one of them would be with her, and then sometimes, with one a-watching her, they'd let her walk about the

island. 'T'other man,' as I'm not to mention, left the island very soon. He'd a wife and three children there; so perhaps he'd good raisons for going. 'Twas sensible like; and he's in America now, so I've heard tell. I recollect," continued the witness, "that one day Kathleen Curly beckoned me to the window of the room where she was locked up; neither of the prisoners being a-near the house at the time, I went to the window. Kathleen then said that something told her I had a mind to be her friend, to assist her to escape. If I would, Mr. Curly would make a man of me for life. I replied I'd be glad to do so if I could, but they watched her too closely for it. Some time after that I did help her out of the window while the prisoners were in a still-house at the back of the island; and she went down to the shore where I had put the oars in the boat all ready. She was to lie down in the boat, and then I was to go down to the shore, shove off the boat, and escape wid her. Unfortunately, Pat Mallon came out of the still just as she was getting to the boat, saw her, so the plot entirely failed. She was then brought back again, put into the room, and the window secured with nails. A couple of days after this, Kathleen Curly prayed the prisoners to let her go, and swore to them by a heavy oath that if they would only land her on the mainland, and let her be free, she would never tell on them, nor should they be prosecuted for the money. They

seemed to give ear to this request; but," said the witness, "I saw a look pass between 'em I didn't quite come the right side of. Howsever, they showed to her as if they was inclined to take her over in the boat and set her free, and I thought perhaps as they *had* a mind to do so. I wondered at it too, for I thought if they did set her free, they was turning hangman on themselves, for 'twould be no more nor less than putting the rope upon their necks, and nothing but a girl's word to keep the noose from drawing. Doesn't know exactly what day of the month that was,—there was a bad way of knowing either the day of the month or week in that place. There was no one to talk to, no Lord's day, nor nothing. Howsever, I was ordered to help with the boat long before daybreak next morning, and they started, the prisoners and myself, with Kathleen Curly, before the stars began to get weak in the sky. I pulled one of the oars, and Michael Mallon the other. Pat Mallon sat in the stern-sheets alongst with the poor girl. She was crying very much, and Pat Mallon, with his arm round her waist, pretended to comfort her, saying, *she would soon be at home with her father.* There was a piece of a strong rope lying in the bottom of the boat, tied to the heavy part of a broken anchor. I never saw it in the boat before. It was just beginning to show the dawn when we got into the deep pool behind the low rocks that run a bit out from the shore; and, by that time,

Kathleen Curly looked very much frightened, and said, in a pitiable voice, 'Pat, sure you can't land me anywhere along here; you ought to keep her,' (meaning the boat,) 'up to the low strand.'

"At the time she said this, she was as white as a sheet of paper in the face, and her lips were quivering, and quite black. I thought she felt what was coming upon her. Thought she called the prisoner 'Pat,' because she was frightened, and wanted to move him; never heard her call either of them by their Christian names before.

"'Pull on smart, now, boys,' said Pat Mallon. 'A few pulls together, we have no time to lose.'

"With that he took the tiller out of the rudder, and struck Kathleen across the forehead. She gave *one frightful scream* and fell between the seats. Pat Mallon then gave her a second blow, and Michael Mallon turned round and fetched her two punches, with the butt end of the oar, in her breast, which seemed to finish her. The prisoners then took off her cloak and bonnet, tied the rope tight under her arms with the heavy piece of anchor attached to it, and slung her out over the side of the boat, the weight of the anchor taking her down out of sight in an instant. At first I had no idea that they were going to murder her. On the contrary, I thought they were going to set her free, until I observed the course they steered, and the pallid terror of the girl; then my heart mis-

gave me, but my own life would have been at stake, as well as hers, if I had attempted to interfere. The moment the deed was accomplished, they returned to the island, where I have been ever since, till this capture by the police."

The examination, in chief, of James Bergin the approver, closed, and the Crown counsel then told him to answer the questions of "that gentleman," pointing to the counsel for the defence, who rose and was surveying the approver with a contemptuous smile, giving an occasional hitch to the side of his gown, near the right shoulder, and taking a severe look at him through his spectacles, as if to read every thought he had. Bergin faced "that gentleman" the moment he was told to answer all his questions, with the same quiet, imperturbable look of simplicity his very ugly face always wore, when, after a few moments' of contemplation, the counsel for the accused began.

"Well, sir," said Mr. Bushwig, "we'll see, sir, if you *will* answer *all* my questions as glibly as you replied to those of my learned friend."

"Arrah, I will, every whit."

"You are an apt scholar, I believe, sir?"

No answer.

"Well, sir, do you hear me? You see you can't answer the very first question I ask you."

"You asked me no question; if you'd done so, I'd answered you."

"Didn't I ask you, sir, whether you were an apt scholar?"

"You did *not;* you tould me *you belaved* I was one, but you asked me *no question.*"

"Oh, I see! Why, you are a cleverer fellow than I thought for—than you look. Well, sir, *are* you an apt scholar? Is that a question?"

"It is. I was always consithered purty smart, *when* I had anything to larn."

"Now, sir, tell *me* a little truth, *if you can;* for, to tell *you* the truth, I don't believe one word of what you have sworn, notwithstanding the very high character given of you by my learned friend. Yes, sir; I'll show those honest gentlemen, the jury, before you leave the table, that they cannot believe *all* you say."

"I'm glad of that, any's how."

"Glad of that, why so, sir? A witness on oath generally wishes to be believed."

"Och! because you are likely to get a good deal out of me I'd rather you didn't."

"Oh, ho! sir, I see you are determined to be sharp with me. Now, Mr. Bergin, may I ask you how long you were living with the Mallons upon this desert island?"

"I tould you I went to live there shortly before Christmas twelve months."

"No, sir, *you did not.* Now you see I can be as stiff as you are stout," (eyeing his inordinately thick-set figure). "You told *me* no such thing."

"Well, I tould t'other gintleman, an you couldn't be off the hearing of me, for your ears were cocked at every word I said."

"Just so. I *did* hear you tell my learned friend, but have the goodness to tell *me* now again. You must not be angry with me, 'Jamesy,' for asking you some of the questions that he did." (This was said in a mild friendly tone.)

"No, I'll not be angry wid you, faith, say what you will; be dad, I'm sure 'tis that you're afther."

"I suppose you were servant boy to the Mallons—but I had better not *suppose* anything, but *ask* the question. *Were* you their servant boy, sir?"

"I may say I was."

"Now, Mr. Bergin," (shaking his finger at him) "you have obliged me to ask you plump questions, and I'll make you give me plump answers. *Were* you their servant boy, *or not?*"

"I was."

"They gave you high wages to live on such a spot. *Did* they, sir?"

"No, I got no wages."

"You got *no* wages! more extraordinary still; gentlemen of the jury, you will mark that. Now, sir, I'll ask you what made you go there to live in that out-of-the-way place, a *tall, handsome,* hearty, comely, slim young fellow like you, possessed of 'book larning,' to bury yourself on a desert island where you would

never be seen nor heard of, and all to serve persons you did not know much about, and *without* wages! Why, that's a sacrifice a young active fellow like you could hardly be expected to make! Come, sir, tell the truth *now*. What brought you, I say, to live on that desert island, where a man of your parts might *never be seen nor heard of?*"

"T'was for that same rason I went there."

"Well, sir, I want to know the *cause* as well as the reason. Tell the court and the jury, sir, *why* you went to live there?"

"Because I was on my keeping, and it was just the place that fitted me."

"On your keeping! mark that, gentlemen of the jury, *on his keeping*. On *your* keeping *for what, sir?*"

"There was a man killed in the fair of Easky, and there was a warrant out agin me upon the head of it."

"That's candid, at all events, sir; and I'm beginning to think you *can* tell *some* truth! Then Kathleen Curly's murder was not the first murder you were concerned in?"

"I wasn't guilty of either: you know how the one was, and I'm going to tell you about the other, if you'll let me, and no botheration."

"Come, sir, then let us hear it, and if there are any more murders, you can tell us about them afterwards.

Come, tell us about the man *you* murdered at the fair of Easky."

"I tell you I didn't murther him; but this is as how it was. A friend of mine caught a stroke of a stick in the skirts of the fair, convanient to where I was standing. I didn't know who was struck till he called out 'James a wochal, will you see me bet?' 'Faix, an' to be shure I won't,' says I, and I called two or three boys, neighbours of mine, to help him. Three or four other boys, frins of t'other boy, come up agin us, and there was jest a few strokes. One of the boys —that's Patsy Doolan—got the laste taste of a blow on the head, and died a couple of days afther. T'other chaps swore agin myself and a couple more, and I made off, and having a friend on the island, I went there, and now you've the whole truth on it."

"The whole truth! well, we'll see if we can't have a little more of it yet. On your oath, sir, did *you know*, or can you form any belief, as to *who* struck the blow that killed Patsy Doolan?"

"On my oath I believe t'was *me*, myself, unfortunately, what struck the blow that killed him."

"Don't you know it was?"

"I *do* know that it was."

"Then, sir, tell the jury why you swore you only believed that it was."

"Shure I must *belave* it, when I *know it*."

"Gentlemen," said Counsellor Bushwig, drawing

himself up to his full height, and eyeing the jury in astonishment; "he believes it, because he knows it; there's a fellow for you."

"So I do."

"On your oath, sir, *don't you know?* with all your out-door accomplishments, I perceive your education has not been neglected, *don't you know* that the word '*believe*' is generally used to express a *doubt*, and not a *knowledge* of a fact?"

"I don't *doubt* but it is, but that doesn't make it right. There's many a thing that I'd belave that I didn't *know*, but I'd belave everything that I did know."

"Very well, sir, that's your explanation, the jury will take your answers for what they are worth. Now just tell me, sir—I'm sorry to trouble your open-hearted confessions so much—I say, sir, tell the gentlemen of the jury had you ever a nickname, I suppose you know what a nickname is, in your parish; in fact, in all the parishes where you were known?"

"I had."

"Be good enough to tell the jury *what* it *was*, and *why* you got it."

"I was called 'Crookeen.'"

"Crookeen what, sir? That is, as I may say, the christian name, what was the surname that came after it, eh, sir?"

"They call me, 'Crookeen Crackscull.'"

"Crookeen Crackscull, a very pretty pair of names for a genteel, amiable, handsome young gentleman like you! Now, will you explain how it was you got those nice, quiet, amiable, mild little appellations?"

"I was called Crookeen because I had a crooked hand, but I don't know *why* I was called t'other name."

"Well, sir, perhaps I may be enabled to enlighten you. Show your left hand to the jury, sir."

Before the witness could reply, a voice in the gallery roared out, "Och! ye bothering ould blackguard, what's that to do wid it?"

"Remove that person from the court," said the judge. A slight bustle then took place among some tittering and emphatic interruptions, and "Corny Lynch," very red in the face, and considerably excited in manner, was taken out of court.

"Show your left hand to the jury, sir," reiterated the cross-examining counsel.

"No I won't, unless my lordship the judge there says I *must*, I don't think you have any right to ask me." So saying, the witness kept his hand folded up under the skirt of his coat.

The Crown counsel then rose. "My lud, I submit to your ludship that the witness is *not* bound to show his hand. The object of my learned friend is very evident, he wishes to annoy and provoke the witness, who has given his evidence in too true and straight-

forward a manner to answer the ends of the cross-examination."

"The witness need *not* show his hand," replied the judge, and the countenance of Mr. Bushwig then rather exhibited that out-of-temper expression which he desired to arouse in the witness, and he continued.

"Well then, Mr. Crookeen, you won't show the jury the hand that murdered the man, and helped to murder a poor innocent girl, to break open her father's house, and to rob her father and mother of a considerable sum of money. Is that the way you came to *deserve* the name of Crackscull?"

"I tell you I don't know; I certainly did *not deserve it.*"

"Was it because you were a quiet peaceable boy, Mr. Crookeen Crackscull, that you acquired that gentle appellation?"

"I tell you again I don't know; it might have been because a blow from a crooked hand like mine, was thought to be worse than any other, and what is more, any boy in the country, let him be ever so quiet, gets the name of Crookeen, if he's got a crooked hand. I can get a quiet peaceable character from them as knows me, for all I got unfortunately into trouble in that 'rookawn' with the 'Doolans.'"

"Just so, such a character as this: 'I certify that Jamesey Bergin *is* a quiet amiable boy who commenced his career before he was twenty years of age,

by, housebreaking, robbery, and two murders.' There, sir, that's the *good* character you would be entitled to receive, and I have no hesitation in thus laying it before the jury. Eh, Mr. Crookeen Crackscull, you're the nicest, quietest, most peaceable youth I ever met; if one can judge from your demeanour at the table, it would be impossible to get a rise out of you."

"I won't let you rise me at any rate if I can help it, for I know well it is *what* you are still at, and that nothing would plase you better than to put me out of meself, to put me in a passion, but you can't."

"How do you know that, sir?"

"From the questions you ask; besides, I've been tould you would, and to keep quiet."

"Oh then, precisely so; I see then you have been drilled in what you should say, that is so, Mr. Crackscull, is it?"

"No better drilled than you have been, anyhow, as to the questions you should put to me."

"It seems I have been pretty right then?"

"I've denied nothing, and you may as well quit trying to vex me at once, for you can't."

"Perhaps not; you have been too well *drilled* for that. Tell me, Mr. Crookeen, I like to vary the beautiful names a little, tell me, Mr. Crackscull, *who* drilled you?"

"Am I obliged to answer that question, my lord?"

"Indeed you are," replied the judge.

"It was the chief of the police then, he's there," pointing to him.

"A very proper person to drill a recruit most efficiently, and no doubt, sir, you stood at 'attention.'"

"I don't know what ye mane by that."

"Well sir, no matter, what did the chief of the police say to you, you know what *that* means?"

"Am I obliged to tell him, my lord."

"You are," said Mr. Bushwig, answering the question and getting very much out of temper; "my learned friend opposite will interfere if I ask you an improper question, so you need not attempt to gain a little time for consideration by a futile appeal to his lordship. Come, what was the first word of command you had from the chief of the police? 'Attention,' I suppose, and you drew your *tall* figure up to its *full height*, eh sir, was that it?"

"No, not a bit like it. He tould me to tell every bit alongst meself, good and bad, and that a Mr. Bushywig, or some such name, would cross-examine me; and sure, he tould the truth, for you're cross enough and to spare, for any gintleman. He tould me, there wasn't a ha'porth that ever I done since I was a gossoon, but you'd be up to as well as meself." (Tittering in court; 'Sh-e-e-e-e-s,' from the officials.) "He tould mè to admit whatever was the truth quietly, for that nothing would plase you more than for me to blink the truth, and for you to get it out afterwards.

I made out from what he said, you'd be all botheration, and warn't I right?"

"Anything else, Mr. Crackscull?"

"Yes, he tould me above all things, not to let you vex me at all, at all, nor put me in a passion, for that's what you'd all the time be afther."

"Go on, sir, anything else?"

"He tould me, the crosser you got, and the louder you spoke, the quieter I should be, and to be steady and not to wriggle about at anything you might say, but to tell *you* the truth as I would *if any gentleman* had asked for it."

"Very good advice," said the Crown counsel, in an under breath across the table.

Mr. Bushwig, however, was not to be easily beaten, and he then recommenced cross-examining the witness, as to his not yet being come to his compunctious visitings.

"Had you any qualms of conscience that night, sir, the night of the robbery and abduction?"

"Not until afther they had left the house and began to drag the girl along to the boat. When I heard her muffled cries through the handkerchief I got sorry."

"On your oath, sir, did you get any of the money?"

"I did. You needn't remind me that I am on my oath, I don't forget it."

"Confine yourself to your answers, sir, and make no remarks. How much money did you get?"

"You don't confine yourself to the simple questions. I got ten pounds."

"You appear, sir, to be a learned gentleman as well as an apt man at cracking the outside of a scull. You seem to know the difference between the words 'they' and 'we.' I'll test your knowledge a little further."

"Test away, you'll find I know the differ."

"What part of speech, sir, is the word 'they?'"

"It's a pronoun, in my opinion."

"So it is, Mr. Crackscull; anyone would suppose you had been a schoolmaster, always at work with the head, eh, Mr. Crookeen?"

"I taught a little at won time."

"Taught a little. 'Vincit amor pedagogi,' eh; do you know what that means?"

"Why then, no, I do not; I never learnt anything but English and Irish, and that's neither."

"Well, sir, but you know the difference between 'they' and 'we.'"

"I do, well."

"What is the meaning of the word 'they,' Mr. Crackscull, which you used so pertinaciously upon your examination in chief?"

"*They* means *them.*"

"*Them,* sir; *who,* sir?"

"When I say '*they*,' I mane them prisoners at the bar; but I take it to mean any two or more persons you may be talking about."

"Very well, sir; now what do you mean by the word 'we?'"

"By goskins, yer honour, *we* manes *you and I*."

At this, which was said by the strange looking face before the court with the same quiet demeanour that had pervaded every feature throughout the lengthened cross-examination, but which the huge mouth in this instance seemed to give with a raciness of tone, as if the witness was aware that he had got the best of his ingenious tormentor, there was a general burst of laughter, which of course was "suppressed," as it is called, that is to say, told to be quiet after it had been heard; and there was no sort of doubt but that the counsel had lost his own temper instead of making the witness lose his.

"Come, sir," almost roared Mr. Bushwig; "why don't you answer me? Have I caught you out at last, sir?"

"No, you have not, you've been caught yourself; you'll be after being sorry for asking that question. I don't like to take you at a short."

"That is a question put by my learned friend," said the Crown counsel, rising, "that I forgot to ask, my lord."

"Surely, Brother Bushwig," said the judge, "you had better not persevere in that line of cross-examination."

Mr. Bushwig looked confused, the perspiration rolled down his face, and he seemed completely exhausted. "I protest, my lord," he said, throwing himself down on his seat, "I see no other question that I could ask *that* witness; he may go down."

The cross-examination of this extraordinary witness lasted above an hour; but of course, not to tire the more gentle reader, I have abbreviated it as much as possible.

In the days of these occurrences there was no "Prisoners' Counsel Act," and there were no witnesses in this case for the defence; indeed, defence there could be none, it was a plain fact of premeditated murder, unmitigated by any one single alleviating circumstance, and attended with the most hideous deeds, from the time of the poor girl's abduction to the bitter hour of her death.

At the close of the trial there was the usual buzz in court, which was instantly silenced when the judge turned to the jury and addressed to them the word "Gentlemen."

The beautiful and luminous charge of the eloquent judge lasted about an hour, and though it was dead against the prisoners, it could not be otherwise. "To acquit the prisoners," the judge said, "must be to dis-

believe every word of the evidence against them—the evidence of life and death."

The jury retired to their room for only a few moments, and returned with a verdict of "guilty."

If the charge to the jury was impressive and eloquent, the address in passing sentence on the prisoners was ten times more so.

The just sentence of the law was passed, and with it the last hope in this world closed upon two of as atrocious villains as ever disgraced the name of man. They, the two Mallons, were removed from the dock, and ordered for execution on the 17th day of the month. The night of that day twelvemonths was the time of the robbery and abduction, followed by the still more horrible crime of the deliberate murder of poor Kathleen Curly.

As George Ritman was leaving the court, amidst the shouting of the judge's crier, "Hear ye all, hear ye all," the sound of the bugle, and the bustle of the crowd, for the first time since in happier days it had been rumoured that he, George, was the preferred lover of poor Kathleen, Corny Lynch pushed through the throng of people and came up to speak to him.

"Thank God, sir, them rascals will swing at any rate."

"Yes, Mr. Lynch," replied George, "they deserve their fate most thoroughly."

"They do, they do, sir; but as to what the judge said about the Lord forgiving them, *I* never can. Don't belave there's forgiveness for them anywhere; and I think there'd be less of them Rockites and murtherers if the priests, parsons, and judges didn't pretend as they *could* get it. Forgive them, indeed, why *I* couldn't forgive them, much less the higher powers! They've made my poor heart desolate in this world, and may be the manes of sending my poor soul to hell."

The crowd then, to George Ritman's intense satisfaction, separated, and carried poor Corny Lynch away, and they did not meet again.

The morning of the 17th of March broke upon the world as the first spring morning of the year. All nature seemed aware that a herald of sweetness, bloom, and love, had come to prepare each thing, bird, beast, and flower, for the genial hour when the beautiful nest should be tenanted by many coloured eggs, when the fawn and lamb should frisk among the fern and in the meadows, and each creature, according to its kind, be wrapped in gentleness, peace, and love!

The "lion," said to usher in the month, had roared or blown himself to sleep, the lamb stood playing with his mane, the timid hare, with her leverets, couched between his paws, and creation seemed to feel that even ferocity must be laid aside in such a sunny hour. High in the air the larks in sweet music trilled, and all

was bright and gay. Sad contrast to the breasts of those who, in the dark and condemned cell, were awaiting a dreadful death. It was St. Patrick's Day, a holiday, and before eight o'clock in the morning the roads leading to the county town were thronged with people; and on they came more and more. Along the roads, across the fields, over the hills—all, all hurrying on towards the county gaol. Behold the vast multitude in holiday dress, and gay and merry; they come to see men slain, but in their own minds there is no thought, no fear of death: yet who can tell how near at hand awaits a sudden dissolution! Each window, wall, and housetop, each gate, each tree, and almost each bearing bough, held people come to see men die; they feel neither gloom nor sorrow, all sadness is within the gaol. There the bright beam of Heaven's blessed day is sad when it falls through a grated window to the convicts' floor. The air that finds its way through ventilation seems scented by the grave, each noise busy without, is to the condemned ear but as a funeral bell; for after to-day the murderers' eye nor ear nor breast shall ever feel the warming sun, hear the sweet bird, nor inhale the fragrance of the blooming flowers. What would not the murderer *now* give for freedom in safety to breathe the sweet scents of the salt sea-weeds, that have been left by the tide on the well remembered strand of the desert island. What would he not give *now*, if he had trampled on those worst, those brutal

transient evil passions—having nothing to do with love, and exalted not by the admiration of the heart and soul—that had made him exert a wretched violence, so debased, so low, that it could be no more than the stepping-stone to murder, and end in nothing else.

All without that dark sombre building, whatever the occasion of the vast crowds coming together—in man, woman, and child, bird and beast, sun and sky, river, hill, and dale—was bright and happy; gloom and sorrow were indeed locked up, as they ever ought to be.

See yonder sparrow with drooping wing, his black throat trembling with joyous ecstacy as he sees his russet-clad mate, with a feather in her bill, come perching on the hand-rail in front of the drop, whence dangle two noosed ropes. He eyes the rope askance, as something not always there: thence see them fly to the spout above to make their nest: *they have no thought on death!*

Look at those jackdaws on the chimney-top above the house of the governor of the gaol; what an enormous twig one of them has laboured to bring in his bill to his mate for nesting purposes from some adjacent grove. There they sit, their light grey eyes looking down askance on the multitude assembled beneath, and on the unusual preparations in front of the prison; their powdered heads look as if they belonged to the Bar! They have made out now that no boy from the

vast crowd below is about to ascend to disturb them, and they have made up their minds to do their best to stop up the governor's chimney, and to cause it to catch fire. See, they have cast off all caution, and gone busily down into the chimney; you may hear their chick, chow, chow, chow, chatting to each other, as they gabble about the best way of making the stick fit as to the desired arrangement. *There is no thought of death there*, from the crowd beneath to the chimney's top, and up into the sky, *there is no thought on death*, other than that to be dealt on murderers. Hark at the glorious song from the thrush on the top of yon slender larch, in the plantation by the river, what floods of brilliant, joyous harmony; and the softly cooing cushat dove, too, in Cleontra's shady grove, in what notes "of peace, and rest, and love," he murmurs to his mate. There is no *thought of death there:* death holds his horrors within the prison walls, and takes no joy in nature, nor in the blessed light of day. That hum in the air just above our heads—that is a humble bee; see, he seeks yon wallflower just above the gallows, and hums and sips its honey! Death, the thought of death, the deaths that are actually going on—they do not even affect an insect nor interfere with his enjoyment; death, and the fear of death, is utterly with man, *the* doomed men, the righteously condemned now trembling within the prison walls.

The stalwart, swarthy, sullen convicts stand side by

side on the brink of death; we hope not on the brink of eternal death, for punishment, however rightly deserved, ought not in the commonest mercy to last for ever. The drop falls, and the murderers die. Stay, turn not away from the sickening sight without an upward glance to heaven. Do you see a mere speck in the bright, clear, sunlit air, almost up into the blue dome itself? Wheeling in graceful rings, as if from volition of the mind rather than of the wing; keeping on in circles higher and higher still, but ever over the scene of the execution. It *is* an eagle; no other bird could fly so gracefully, or attain that height. *Can* that be *the* eagle from the rock,—sent there to see his mission thus fulfilled by the same Mighty Will that bade him bring to light the murder? It *is*, it *must* be *that* splendid bird; and wheeling higher and higher still, now he is lost in the blue distance. Heaven's messenger, perhaps, gone home when his appointed task is done!

THE TWO COUSINS.

THE TWO COUSINS.

CHAPTER I.

In the course of a man's life, if his life has been somewhat long, he must have seen a great many different characters of both sexes, as well as a great many events, telling deeply on the lives of others as well as his own. Nothing ever written by the Bard of Avon within my own experience was more true than that "there is a tide in every man's life, which taken at the flood, leads on to fortune, omitted the voyage of their lives," is, in some cases wrecked, or "bound in shallows and in miseries." In the earlier years of life, when pleasures, pastimes, and the fashion of the world, are distracting the then sanguine and malcable mind, and rendering the aspiring eyes blind to the sober objects that occasionally make their way through the falser light, to the front, how often do we see the tide neglected, the steady steerage and the "venture" lost, in order but for a time to sail on moonlit, phosphoric waves, brilliant, but from a borrowed light, and spark-

ling only through the momentary splash of breaking bubbles.

Advice! And what real good does the advice of elder people do? If they tell the truth, it is unmindfully derided; and if they go beyond fact, and paint imaginary horrors, as scarecrows in a field to keep away the natural, or instinctive crows of creation, one shadow of improbability, or over-estimated terrors, upsets all, and the youth of both sexes sneer derisively, and say, "What bosh those old people try to make us believe." And then thus it is the Latin adage, that "experience teaches," is the sole guide-star that really directs youth; yet how unfortunate it is, that in gaining the golden knowledge experience alone can give, so many voyagers on the seas of life learn the world's navigation all too late to steer to a happy haven. As pieces of wreck, they toss upon the waste of waters to vere about they know not whither, to the here and there of fragmentary decay, to destruction during life, and to a problematical or unknown future.

The old nursery saying, "that evil deeds never prosper," is about as wide of the truth, as anything can be: we for ever see them prospering the villain, during the time life gives him to enjoy his illgotten harvest. The bad acts committed may not tend to good after the life of their perpetrator; but, for his life, the sinner generally revels in riches, and in the full exercise

of enjoyment of his pernicious passions; while the robbed, the wronged, the cheated, and ill-used source of the villain's gains, plods on in worldly distress, unpitied,—for the world has not time for pity,—and exists through privations that, but for the stubborn courage of the just, might have driven him to forget the high code of chivalry, that dwells not alone under gold and jewels, and forced him, but for his bravery, on the coward felony that used to inherit the stake at the four cross-roads.

In the present tale with which it is my hope to occupy the reader's attention, there are two heroes. Both, when they come thus before us, were young men, at the onset of life, and second cousins to each other.

Though not moving in the first circles of society, still they had a perfect right to attach "esquire" to their names, and each had a moderate income, enough to maintain him respectably in private life, or, if he chose to speculate and risk a loss for gain, to embark at the head of any speculation.

Before they had attained their majority, at which time they were to come into their fortunes, left them by the uncle of one, who seemed to have no nearer connections to whom to bequeath his wealth, those two young men chanced to be thrown in contact with an extremely pretty girl, a Miss Skipemsin, the daughter of the curate of that name, doing duty at the

vicarage of the little town where they were boarding for education under her father.

Henry Frampton, or Harry Frampton, as he was familiarly called, was a good-looking man, full of health and spirits; while Robert Ranghorn was neither so handsome nor so kindly disposed, but of a more gloomy and irascible temper. As Miss Skipemsin was decidedly the belle of that rural and retired district, no wonder that she became very attractive in the eyes of both these young men, and very small wonder either that she seemed to like their attentions, and with a most instinctive generosity permitted the one as many little liberties as she did the other. Walk when she would, in spring and summer, with either of these coupled suitors, flowers were gathered and presented to her, and did she but sit down in sheltered places, with either of them, her hand was just as much taken by the one as the other, and as many kisses on it implanted by Harry as by Bob.

In talking to a girl, a friend of hers, she used to boast of the attentions she received, adding, as is sometimes done by the poetic fancies of the fair sex, a good deal more of imaginary veneration than really existed. She told of handfuls of hair that Harry had torn from his "nice curly head," because he had discovered that Bob had been out walking with her alone half the day; and of the poor straight locks that had been scattered to the wind, when Bob found out that Harry had been

in her little boudoir, *tête-à-tête* with her, when he was supposed to have gone out fishing. For the first few months of this double courtship, the young men themselves kept on friendly terms; they never eyed each other with anything like hostility, unless, while they were both with her, she bestowed greater attention on the one than the other,—a fault, if it was a fault, she sometimes committed, solely for the purpose of gratifying her vanity, and of seeing the happiness or misery she had it in her power, at all times, to command.

This state of things continued for some time. Winter and summer the attentions of both these young men were devoted to her. In winter or in rain, each ran for her cloak, that they might press her very pretty shoulders as they put it on, or for her umbrella or clogs, that hand and foot might receive the same mute mark of adoration. The worthy Mr. Skipemsin, standing by all the time, thinking of no more than his next Sunday's sermon, which, though not much to occupy his mundane faculties, lifted his eyes above mortality, and sent his brain wool- or mist-gathering to the clouds. Though it *is* said that woman *can* do much evil, when bent on mischief, still, as if Providence for ever assigned to their conduct a saving clause, in this instance Miss Skipemsin was the authoress of *some* good to these her joint suitors. The study to attract and please her gave them a better carriage, softened their voices, and ameliorated their manners:

and besides these benefits caused them to vie with each other in pleasing her father, and in obtaining his approbation and good word as to their facility and progress in study.

It chanced one fine summer's day, when she was seated beneath a shady oak, with these two young men lying on the grass at her very pretty little feet, which kept peeping out on purpose to attract attention, the lord of the manor passed by, very well known to all three; and his dog, who had just been taking a bath in the little river close at hand, on seeing the young lady, and remembering other young ladies whom he loved, he at once bounded to her, jumped into her lap, shaking his long curly coat all over her.

Now it so happened that this lord of the manor, though considerably senior to the two young men then present, was by no means the sort of person that young ladies disliked to talk to,—I don't say "to flirt" with, —because neither that great man of verbose authority, one "Johnson," who wrote a dictionary, could define it any more than I can do; so Miss Skipemsin was charmed with the rencontre, and being perfectly mistress of the situation, immediately took advantage of it.

The lord of the manor hastened up with a thousand apologies for the conduct of his young dog, feared that she must be very wet, and added "that the dog ought not to have followed him, as he was but an unruly

puppy, and he was going to attend a parish meeting, where 'Diver' was not required. He feared, too, that, wet as his dog had made her, Miss Skipemsin would be curtailed in the enjoyment of the beautiful day, as she would have to go home and change her dress; and all this grieved him excessively."

"Oh, no," she replied: "I can assure your lordship that the dear, good, kind dog, has not hurt me in the least, nor made me wet to signify. Here, Harry," she said: "I'm sure you will lead my lord's dog back to the hall, as he does not desire to take him on to the village; and you, Bob, run to the vicarage," both were a mile off either way, "and bring me my large brown cloak. Betsy will find it for you."

"At least," said the lord of the manor, "permit me to wipe away all the moisture I can from your dress, and that very graceful little foot which really looks soaked through; it has peeped forth as if it challenged my assistance," saying which, the lord of the manor knelt down with his handkerchief to dry the foot, as well as the dress, and that done, he sat down by her side. It was with a look of sadness rather than of admiration, or perhaps of both combined, that his expressive eyes were fixed on the face of his pretty companion, when, after a few common-place sentences, he remarked,—

"Plenty of suitors, here, my dear Miss Skipemsin,—no lack, in this retired place, of admirers. You have

just had two, and now you have a third in me, ready and willing to slay dragons or giants at your bidding, and all for love of those bright eyes."

"Admirers, my dear lord! suitors, suitors! I have none, not even, in reality, in you. You don't admire me a bit!"

"Yes I do; I am perfectly alive to all your charms," replied his lordship; "and having come to a time of life, when a feeling of admiration, however intense, is not new to me, I can understand how intense it *may* become to much younger men, whose hearts have not been macadamised by the paviors of the world. You have your two lovers well in hand, at least *now*, to sedulously do your bidding; you will not always, perhaps, be able to keep them in the leash."

"Lovers!" exclaimed Miss Skipemsin. "These are two boys; I have no more serious thoughts of them, than they have of me."

"Boys!" exclaimed his lordship; "boys of nineteen or twenty—I don't look on them in a childish light. They are old enough and grown enough, either of them, to be your husband: and now, my dear Miss Susan," for that was her Christian name, "listen to me. These two young men are in love with you, as much as any two men can be in love, and they entertain for you that first passion which is apt to give a colour to the future life; if tenderly or well-used it may lead to happiness, but if heartlessly or rashly tampered with,

it is impossible to say to what an amount of misery it may tend. Let one who admires you warn you in time. Do not minister to the admiration of those two young men, do not play them off, the one against the other, for mere idle vanity; but if you have no serious affection for either, go away on a visit. Don't too long indulge in such dangerous approximation; if you do, you will one day have cause to repent it most grievously."

Susan cast her eyes upon the ground, and at once saw that that often-resorted-to, flimsy cloak for first impression of love on the one side, and disguise for a mischievous vanity on the other, did not do when in conversation with a man like the lord of the manor.

"Well, but if I do or should really like *one of them!* what harm, then, is there in that?" she rather pettishly exclaimed. "Perhaps your lordship's severity will answer me?"

"None at all," replied his lordship, "if you *have* selected from the two; but then, my dear Miss Susan, if such a selection has been or is to be made, don't trifle with him that is to be discarded. I fear that, up to this time, you have done so. It is ever dangerous to turn affection into hatred,—affection that has been fostered only to be slighted; and the more ardent the passion, the greater the pain when the fervour has to be destroyed: so, I beseech you, select, *or* refrain from this dangerous amusement in time. But here come these two *young men*,—'boys,' you call them. Upon

my life! they're well-grown children. I wish I was of their age. And, by my faith! they have made good haste to execute your command; and as the distance they have been is the same, by their simultaneous return, gad! the one is as good a runner as the other. You see they would not leave you any longer than they were obliged to do, even with me."

So saying, the lord of the manor rose, and, taking her hand in adieu, thanked Harry Frampton for taking his dog to the kennels, and went on his way to the parish meeting.

The words which she had heard from a well-known man of the world made some impression on Miss Skipemsin, and, for a little while, she led her lovers a hard time of it; so much so, that they began to have jealous feelings towards the lord of the manor. So often does the green-eyed monster arise on no fabric at all, to mar even the happiness of unsullied love, and to make mad the most well-intentioned and devoted minds with phantasies, which, being imaginary, can in no way be grappled with nor confuted.

Holiday time came,—holiday time will come,—and, during the time the festive idleness lasts, much mischief often accrues, as well as considerable pleasure.

In this instance, and much to his reluctance, Harry Frampton had an invitation to the house of some friends, for the holidays, which he was obliged to accept; while Bob Ranghorn, not being asked any-

where, had, to him, a heaven on earth accorded, in being left at the vicarage the sole companion of Susan Skipemsin, free, for a while, from any other study than that of the gloating admiration he felt for her charms. Harry's leave-taking of Susan was not in the least agreeable though to Bob Ranghorn, for it was too affectionate to please him. He thought he saw a tear in her eye,—she had never shed one for him; and even the knowledge that he whom he had grown of late to regard as a detested rival was about to leave for some time, not to thwart him again, did not altogether recompense him for the regret he felt sure he saw in Susan's eyes when his fellow-student went away. Nor did the conduct of Susan satisfy him; for she seemed to take delight in dwelling on the good points of Harry's character, and in snubbing Bob when he attempted to console her for the loss of him whom to her he termed *their* friend, and in trying to fix her attention more upon himself. Susan saw she had the power to make him happy or to render him miserable, to raise or depress him with the merest word or look; and now that he had become her sole amusement, she revelled in the opportunity, and led him the life of a slave. The mind of Robert Ranghorn was as different as possible from that of Harry Frampton. The former, when anything thwarted him, was morose to a degree; and he never seemed to forget an injury, but hugged it to his heart as the jewel of his life, to be produced at

some future time, inflamed in all its evil, and destined for revenge. In manners he was more retiring than Harry Frampton, and not near so good looking; and perhaps having felt this latter fact, that may have thrown a diffidence over his proceedings while in presence of his rival. Now, when that rival was away, the strong resolution in him for good or for evil, as the case might be, showed itself; and in no bashful terms he expressed his utter devotion to Susan Skipemsin. At first she received it, as he thought, coldly, and amused herself with torturing him with reference to the good qualities of his rival; but at last she seemed to listen, and there being no one else to sport with or to cut across their game of love with better attractions, she gave herself up to the play, without one thought of any other consequences than that Harry Frampton, after a time, would return home and interrupt it, and open a fresh fund of amusement.

Bob Ranghorn's devotion, strong and intemperate as it was, had nothing of chivalry about it. It never induced him to love the cause of his adoration better than himself; he loved her as a sordid miser would love his gold. A treasure due to his possession—his, and only his—a fortune to enrich his arms and to minister to animal delight; not to be a household deity to rear a family and to make all around her happy. No—she was to live for him and him alone; not to entertain even a reasonable harmless

wish, unless in some way or other he was sole master of the occasion.

At first, Susan gave in to his tyrannical ideas, simply because the intenseness of them amused her, and in them she perceived how great was the fascination she had engendered; but when, in the calm retirement of her own room, woman's wit would not be kept down, she could not help observing to herself the deep impression she had made on a morose and violent disposition, and almost to regret that she had done so, and to fear the consequences.

Ranghorn had often urged her to elope with him from her father's house, who, good man, saw not an inch further than the bald head of his blear-eyed clerk beneath his pulpit on a Sunday, nor an inch outside the village school on week days; but seeing that her father was utterly ignorant in the matter, Susan took on herself the sage conduct of the affair, and posed her lover by the simple question of, "If they ran away how were they to live, and whither should or could they go?"

This obstacle she knew to be incontrovertible; to have "nowhere to go to," and "no means of living," *was* an effective stop to any elopement; but, alas! it was not a denial arising from the proper source. It led the young man to *think* that she loved *him alone*, and *would* run away with him and be his wife *if she could!* Circumstances alone stayed her from that course; any thought of Harry Frampton, *now no*

longer his rival, had nothing to do with it. He was the sole, the envied possessor of the charms he had so long coveted. She saw all this, but took no means to undeceive him. She did not really love him, she knew that; she was fully aware that he thought she did, and the thing amused her as it was. She liked to have a slave to tend her footsteps and to anticipate her bidding, to watch her every look and to worship the earth on which she trod; and then she silenced any regret or doubt as to this existing state of affairs by the futile supposition and dangerous idea, that, "Oh, it would be all right when Harry Frampton returned," and the "boys," as she continued to call them, in spite of the well-intended caution from the lord of the manor, were again together, fishing together, and amusing themselves in friendly companionship when not in her presence. When with her, vieing with each other to please her as, heretofore, had been their accustomed occupation. Poor girl! Like a great many other girls, she little knew the seeds she was sowing, nor the deep, dark, strong, but narrowed furrows into which those seeds might fall. In many instances, the child and its education mars the man. Sage masters are too apt to regard a first love as a foolish whim, as a childish or temporary insanity, to be laughed at and expunged like the pencilings on a slate; and so first love may be in some instances,—when the heart that first feels the beautiful sensation has opportunities for wider attach-

ments, and meets with sweets more luscious than those that first enchanted, with hues so dazzling as to diminish the brilliancy of the first evanescent flame. But when none of these detractions and distractions are to the fore, when the young man's first love is of a superior class to others offered to his view in the society into which his position destines him to fall, then he looks back to and up to the girl of his first love, and clings to her as one so superior to others that to lose her would be worse than death.

No man knows his own disposition, nor much of his own heart, till he has been in love. To really love, is to be a slave to one all-absorbing idea, to one intense power that pervades the mind, which gives to the tones of music the syllabled words of the loved one's voice, and to the air an aroma which may have resembled a perfume on her handkerchief or letter; even a scented flower plucked in her presence is enough to bring to a fond heart the spirit of the loved one, though she is far away. In dark and unruly breasts—breasts without a vestige of chivalry in them—it is dangerous to awaken such feelings as these, to treat them with contempt, and then to trust to chance for their suppression. The mind of Robert Ranghorn was not one to be elated or depressed at the pleasure of anyone; his was not a noble and chivalrous nature; he loved and could love no one better than himself; his amenities were law, and when thwarted, his feelings of revenge were great;

and yet a pretty, well educated, graceful girl could trifle with a petard like unto this, and trust to *chance to make him forget it.*

How often do we see "girls," of this "period," as well as of periods that have passed, lay themselves out to attract men unworthy of their attention, and incapable of generous love, simply and solely to cut out other girls supposed to be their rivals in beauty, and for their own temporary amusement, to minister to their self-vanity and to earn a character for being generally admired among men. Girls have done and will do this, despite the examples we have seen, when disappointed suitors of this sort, finding that they had been trifled with, and founding a monstrous lie on a little circumstance, have boasted of favours they never really had received, and even shown to their boon companions, trinkets, rings, and a lock of hair, as trophies of their amatory success. When a low-minded man sees that the girl who once encouraged him gives her heart to another, his mean and revengeful feelings then break forth, and instead of forgiving the "wincing of a wanton colt," and in his duty to the sex, binding up the wounds he in the first instance had pleasurably received, he turns like a trampled-on adder, not to save himself, but to insert the venom of his revengeful fangs, to injure and to inflict a pain, the agony thus occasioned being of no service to him whatever.

Time ran on, the holidays were over, and the day fixed for Harry Frampton's return to his studies at the vicarage. The expectation of his return had a very different effect on the two who most expected him.

The single-purposed, plodding old clergyman, simply was aware of a given day for a pupil's return. His daughter Susan awaited impatiently for the return of *her* pupil, the one she had schooled in an affair of love, and the one she really loved, or liked, the best; and Bob Ranghorn watched for him now, not as a man would watch for the return of a friendly companion in his studies and his sports, but as for one who was to decide a, to him, most anxious question. It was this: Was Harry to come back to the vicarage now as a disappointed or "cut out" suitor, or as one to take from the self-supposed man-in-possession all he held most dear,—his girl, his happiness, *and his life;* for it seemed to him as if his all was staked upon a single cast. Well, the lumbering coach that plodded on the roads in those days stopped at the village inn, and from the box beside the coachman Harry Frampton descended. Susan Skipemsin had run to meet him, while Bob, not inclined to run by her side on such an occasion, and yet unwilling to leave her alone to the greeting of Harry, followed some distance in the rear, but near enough to see that so unfeignedly glad was Susan to see Harry, that Harry, emboldened by appearances, actually folded her in his arms and kissed her.

A kiss on the cheek of a girl seems but a little thing, and in sound it is or ought to be scarcely audible, yet there were ears present on whose aural nerves, that hasty closing of the lips sounded like the funeral toll of St. Paul's, as a death-knell to his fondest hopes. He had often asked for a kiss, but as often been refused: true, the refusal was made under different circumstances, but still there was the fact, her joy at seeing his rival, her outstretched arms in congratulation of his return, her hasty flight to meet him, and then the seal upon it all, all in all, drove a rusty dagger into his soul, and in that one instant corrupted him from head to foot. When Harry and Susan turned to look for him, they only saw his back, as he slowly and moodily walked away to the vicarage, without any greeting whatever to the newly arrived.

"Why!" exclaimed Harry Frampton, "what has happened to Bob? Is he ill, or what is it that prevents his coming to shake hands with me?"

"Oh, never mind him," replied Susan, her face suffused with the blush of guilt, for she felt then the first evident sting, consequent on her folly, "He is only out of temper; he will be better by-and-by. Come on, and see papa." Thus saying, they proceeded to the vicarage and made their way to the study of her papa, wherein they found the curate busy among perpetually confused papers and memoranda, notes to form portions of his next sermon mixed up with

notes intended for preceding ones, and among them all little unpaid bills and little paid ones, and letters from his Bishop side by side with invitations to archery meetings and directions from poor law boards and lunatic asylums. As his daughter and Harry entered, the good old man pushed his spectacles from the bridge of his nose, well up upon his forehead over his eyes.

"Harry," he exclaimed, "I am glad to see you—you are a welcome addition to our little household, and your return will do us all good. Master Robert has taken your absence to heart so much that of late the very allusion to your name has made him gloomy, has it not, my love?" turning to his daughter and resetting his spectacles upon their legitimately useful place, his nose,—upon the place, rather, for which they were invented, for glasses and all failed to make him see that his daughter blushed in some confusion when he referred to the dislike evinced by Bob at the mere mention of Harry's return. At the supper hour that evening, Bob Ranghorn did not appear, and on inquiries being made for him at a later hour in the evening, the waiting-maid replied that Mr. Ranghorn, feeling himself unwell, had retired to bed. During the remainder of that evening it had been evident to any eyes that could have seen, that Susan felt under some embarrassment, she was absent in look and manner, and not at ease, nor in her usual spirits. She was aware for the

first time of the danger of trifling with a morose and savage disposition, and she well knew the reason why Robert Ranghorn walked away instead of welcoming the arrival of Harry, and what was the cause of his absenting himself from the supper-table, and retiring to his room. She felt herself, even if an opportunity *had* offered, in no position to enter into any explanation with Harry, as to the strange conduct of his former friend, and she had to return to her room, perhaps not to rest, leaving the two young men to come to some better understanding on the following morning.

The morning came, and in the garden before breakfast the two young men met. Harry, feeling no ill-will in regard to Bob,—men on the pinnacle of success of any kind are generally in a good humour, particularly with those whose ambition they have thwarted,—held out his hand; but though Bob Ranghorn took it, it was with a scowl of hatred on his brow, and the grasp of his hand resembled a vice of iron in its coldness and tenacity. So severe was the grasp he made, and such the expression on his brow, that Harry asked him what he meant. "Have you any cause of quarrel with me, man? Speak out!" he exclaimed, stepping a pace or two back; "I'm not aware that I have offended you!"

"Harry Frampton," exclaimed Bob, in a bitter, concentrated tone of voice, "you *have* offended me! You have wounded me in a way *I shall never forget.* You think you are my superior in all things. I have

observed how you taxed your brain to beat me in our studies, how you worked upon the ice to make yourself a better skater than I was, and how you kept to yourself the knowledge of the growth of the earliest cowslips in a sheltered mead, that you might be the first to bring her favourite flower to Susan Skipemsin. *She* is the cause of quarrel between *us*. Renounce your pretensions to her, or come behind the vicarage to the grove. I have therein secreted two foils of equal length, the buttons removed and the points sharpened. Give me all the satisfaction in your power for crossing my path, for coming between me and Heaven, between me and *my* love?"

"Coming between you and *your* love, sir?" replied Harry, in some astonishment and contempt. "I left you on equal terms: we both of us were fond of the daughter of our tutor, and did all we could to win her approval. I have been absent for weeks, while you have been in constant association with her: how can I have come between you and your love? Nonsense, sir; either you are mad, or your morning cup has not been of the weakest. I will neither renounce my pretensions to the good graces of Miss Skipemsin, if I have any, nor yield to the ravings of a madman. Stand out of the way, sir, and let me pass!"

"Then," replied Robert Ranghorn, filled with rage in every limb, "coward that you are, take that!" and with

his right hand he dealt Harry such a blow as caused him to stagger against the wall.

Harry, recovering quickly from the assault, struck him to the ground; for he was not only the stronger of the two, but he had made himself a proficient in the art of self-defence. Sitting upright, with every evil passion expressed on each lineament of his countenance, "Coward!" exclaimed the fallen antagonist, "you rely on your personal prowess, with the limbs accorded to your brutal nature; yet, cur that you are! you dare not give me the equal chance of weapons. Your craven nature fears to die, *and fears even to look on the death of your bitter foe.* You shrink from the deadly arbitrament of weapons, and you fear for your own death, as well as mine. If you are *not* the coward I pronounce you, come with me to the grove and fight it out!"

Stung with these reproaches, Harry answered not; but beckoning Robert Ranghorn to follow him, he led the way to the shades of the tall elm-trees that harboured a colony of rooks. Then, arrived at a little open space he paused, and saw his challenger go to some ivy that grew round a dilapidated summer-house, and produce a couple of the weapons he had described. These he presented, hilts foremost, for Harry's choice, and when each held his weapon, they stretched their arms and the points of their weapons to each other's armpits, as a preliminary to prove that the length of weapon was the same. It was no empty preliminary

on one side, however, for the instant the inoffensive proceeding had taken place, without due notice "to engage," Robert Ranghorn made a short half-lunge at Harry's heart; but ungovernable fury misdirecting the intended assassination, for it could be regarded in no other light, the foil only passed beneath the waistcoat and shirt, grazing the skin, and, from the strength of its application, bringing the hilt with much force against the higher rib. Without shortening his foil as he might have done, for deadly execution, seizing the hilt of the aggressive weapon Harry dealt his murderous antagonist such a blow with the hilt of the foil, that for a second time that morning he laid him prostrate on the earth, disarmed, and bleeding from a severe cut upon his temple.

"Coward!" exclaimed, or rather hissed through his clenched teeth, the prostrate man. "I intended that one or both of us should die. You have your victory, and the result is in your hands. Kill me, kill me! If you do not do so, I will haunt your steps through life to do you evil; *murder shall dog your heels*, and without giving you a chance to use and exult in your bodily prowess, I will bide my time and be revenged. *Kill me*, then, coward, *if you dare*. You know you have not the pluck to do it. Conscience makes you a cur. You cannot, you dare not kill me, even to save yourself or those you love from a murderous and everlasting revenge."

At this moment steps were heard approaching, and Harry, the two foils under his arm, glided down a nut-grown walk, leaving his prostrate foe to escape from sight as best he could. The steps were those of Susan. She had heard the voices and the sound of a heavy blow and fall, and she suspected as well as feared the truth. She came, but came when the field was forsaken and the combatants gone; there was a deeply imprinted foot-mark or two on the short, soft turf, and a small pool of blood, and in terror she returned to the vicarage, uncertain as to what might or might not have happened, and fearing the elucidation that was to come.

On entering the breakfast-room, she found her father alone and seated at table, gazing vacantly at the tea-pot, and wondering at her absence. Excited as she was, and filled, too, with anxiety, she assumed her usual place at the tea-urn, and in silence; but, with a trembling hand, began to pour out the tea. Her father, good man, detected none of these signs of disarrangement; had an elephant walked into the room and requested toast enough to fill his trunk, good Mr. Skipemsin would have deemed it a matter of daily occurrence, and complied with any number of rounds. Though a pretty and living illustration of great nervous apprehension, his daughter continued her accustomary duty at the table; she started, however, as the handle of the door turned, and Harry Frampton made his

appearance. On his entrance their eyes met, and in that momentary glance she saw that something very important had to be told; but how to tell it to her father, therein lay the gist of the difficulty. Harry took his seat opposite to the vacant chair usually occupied by Robert Ranghorn, and breakfast proceeded for some moments in silence, when suddenly the curate pushed his spectacles high up upon his forehead—his usual custom when he most desired to see clearly—and looking in the vacant chair, exclaimed, "Where can that boy be got to?" There was a momentary silence after this, when Harry answered the question.

"I don't think, sir, you will ever see him in that chair again."

At these words the sugar basin fell from Susan's hand. She remembered the blood on the grass, and in terrified accents she exclaimed, "Is he dead?"

"No," continued Harry, "he is *not* dead; the one of us two that has been nearest to death is myself. He attempted my life when he thought he had me at advantage, and I struck him down with the hilt of the weapon he had challenged me to use, and which was in my hand at the time. As he lay on the ground he dared me to kill him, and called me a coward because I would not do so; when, on the approach of footsteps, he rose, going one way, while I went the other. The foils, without buttons, and with sharpened points, are in my room now; while the wound, a mere scratch," ob-

serving that Susan was more alarmed than ever, "upon my left side, can testify to the deadly intention of the thrust made at me before we had each of us given the signal to engage."

There is a common saying, or rather common misapprehension, that terror will make a man's hair stand on end. Now poor Mr. Skipemsin had only a very few lank white hairs on either side his head, yet they kept their accustomed place when he arose like a man of stone, pale and stiff as the statue in "Don Juan," and seized the bell in a mute agony of outraged despair. To the bell-rope he hung long enough to make the parlour-maid, the cook, and charwoman hear, through its tripled violence, that something unusual had happened, and then the bell-rope broke; and as he turned with the cord in his hand, the three terrified maid-servants jostled into the room, the one against the other, each bearing a pail of water in apprehension of fire, and knocking Susan in her chair completely over, deluging the table with boiling water, as well as cold, through the upsetting of the urn.

"Take," cried Mr. Skipemsin, pointing with an outstretched trembling first finger—not as we do on the theatrical stage, with the first and second finger combined—"take, take that man into custody, and bind him with this rope," flinging the bell-rope across the table to the door. "That done, while you hold him, Susan, my love, fetch our headborough or beadle."

Instead of these commands being obeyed, his daughter's arms were flung around him. "Dear, dear papa, pray be quiet; there is no need to take anybody into custody, there is nothing like a breach of the peace now; the horrid affair, whatever it was, is over. No one is killed, no one seriously hurt, though one has gone away."

The old man stood, thus held in his daughter's arms, staring first at Harry and then at the vacant chair. "If he is *not* dead, my child, then why is he not at breakfast?" he asked. "The vicarage, oh, the vicarage!" he continued; "the mundane or mortal-temple of the reprovers of sin, 'Ichabod, Ichabod, the glory of our house hath departed.' The quiet manse is a battle-ground for men, and I, the poor humble incumbent, will be pointed at by the finger of scorn." As he said these words his white cheek fell on his daughter's shoulder in an agony of tears, during which Harry Frampton signed to the maid-servants to leave the room, a signal they were delighted to obey.

It was a long time before Susan, in conjunction with Harry Frampton, could calm the outraged feelings of her father; but at last they succeeded in doing so, and then came the more delicate and difficult part of the proceeding, that of accounting for the violent and extraordinary conduct and flight of Robert Ranghorn; for it was now evident that he had gone away, as a boy had been to the Vicarage to procure his portmanteau,

and other things that belonged to him. Concealment as to the fact of the love between Harry and Susan could no longer be kept up; so Harry, putting a bold face on the matter, confessed to her father his affection for Susan, and asked to be his accepted son-in-law.

"Impossible—it can't be," replied the good old man; "you have had no time, no opportunity, to fall seriously in love with each other yet; you are too young, and you have not been much together. And yet, if I am truly to comprehend this mystery, this horrible affair, both these unhappy boys have loved my little daughter, and as rivals have come to loggerheads together, nay, to the endangerment of their lives. Dear me, my poor dear sainted and lamented angel of a wife would never have dreamed of this! She and I used to walk out together for a long time, and never thought of love; till one day her mother called me on one side while her father, an opulent farmer, was busy in the hayfield, and addressing me, as I thought, with some severity in her manner, 'Mr. Skipemsin,' said she, 'I want to know what it is you mean by my dear daughter?' Taken aback, as it were, I replied, 'Nothing.' 'Nothing!' said the good lady; 'do you call it meaning "nothing" when all the neighbours are talking of your walking her out almost every day? If you mean "nothing," it is very wicked of you. My child is very dear to me, and I know she loves you, nothing or no nothing; so if you don't wish to marry her, you must leave your

lodging and find another, or the church you do for will have to do for itself.' I assure you, my dear children," the old man continued, "that up to that moment, when this good lady asked me what I meant, I had never so much as taken my late wife's hand, and never thought about love of any kind. We were married, though, and this dear pledge," smoothing his daughter's very long hair, "is the only comfort left to me. Her hand, Master Harry, is a great demand for you to make; but there, there, if we can manage matters, and you will live with me, it may come to pass; so for the present say no more about it, and let us forget the unchristian attempt of the boys to take away each other's lives."

When once a father consents to consider as possible the union of his daughter with the man she loves, any observant looker-on, in his cool senses, without having wedding inflammation in his own brain, to confuse his ideas and threaten temporary insanity, must be well aware that the contemplators of that "double centaur" existence of man and wife,—such *possibility* being admitted as to their eventually coming together,—at once act upon it as an accomplished fact, and the young lady's friends begin to think of the wedding presents they will offer to her acceptance.

For some weeks the lovers led a very happy life; the woods and the fields sighed sweetly to their sighs, and responded to their murmured words of affection in the rushing river and the rippling brook, and from the

tiny lesser rills, as well, that struggled to reach the larger water-ways through beds of cresses and "forget-me-nots."

It is very beautiful, a halcyon time of this kind, when nothing stirs to mar the blissful harmony of the hour, and rivalry and jealousy are gone, gone to be suffused in the struggling world away; and the lovers felt the bliss of that indulgent hour, that harvest of happy things so few and far between in the allotted days of mortal life, where so much of the world is winter, blight, and discontent, and they enjoyed those summer hours to the full. Oh, how, true narrator as I am, *how* I absolutely scorn and detest the trite expressions of "courting her," or "paying his addresses;" the latter phrase is quite as vulgar as the term "gent," for the use of which, one of our police magistrates threatened to commit a constable if he "said it again." "Paying his addresses:" it makes me think of the reply to a lord mayor and aldermen, who had just drunk my health, and the prosperity of the society to which I belonged. It savours of the City, and is rank in the nostrils of chivalry. The words of an old song "he showed her a ring and implored her to marry" are bad enough, but to court, or pay addresses, these words should be bound up with the term gent, and trodden into oblivion for ever.

It is beautiful, though, when man *is* mated with the bird he loves, and shares in the bliss of surrounding

nature, it is the season when he is as happy as the song-thrush, mounted on the tip-top bough of his aspiration, and singing to his gentle mate sitting on her bright bluish-green and black-spotted eggs in her clay-lined nest below.

Oh, that the summer of man's life knew no decay, no autumn, no winter! Oh, that we could chain the happy foot of Time, and stay him from treading out the bloom beneath his noiseless feet! Could it have been done, I would have essayed it long ere this, but—

> "Out upon Time, who will leave no more
> Of the things to come, than the things before:
> Out upon Time, who for ever will leave
> But enough of the past for the future to grieve."

Suffice it, then, to say, that Harry Frampton and Susan Skipensin were as happy as they could be, and that jolly haymakers often had to turn away their laughing faces when the lovers kissed, which they not only did when they parted for the night, but, strange to say, when they arose to part from the bosky dell where they had been sitting.

During all this time nothing more was heard of Robert Ranghorn, save that uncertain rumour said, that, having joined a desperate gang of midnight depredators on deer, game, and private property, he had been captured and committed to prison for six months' hard labour, on account of "night poaching,"

as it is called, and wounding, with intent to disable, those who protected the property of their master. Subsequent to this conviction he had committed other crimes and been transported for seven years.

To cut a long tale short, Harry Frampton and Susan Skipemsin were eventually married, and for some time continued to reside with her father at the Vicarage. The good old curate lived long enough to see his grandchild on his knee, a fine round-faced, merry-cheeked little boy, with legs like a young Bacchus, and a rolling head so set on its then inefficient neck, that unaccustomed beholders looked on in terror, lest the head should drop off and roll among them like a cricket-ball.

When good Mr. Skipemsin was buried, Harry and his blooming wife, by way of change for a time, went off and resided at Scarborough; and then, his fortunes having improved, at the request of his wife, who wished to be near her old haunts again, he returned to her native village, purchased a small, but neat and gentlemanlike house, and there they took up their residence in rest and contentment; their little child, who soon grew to be a very handsome fair-haired boy, the sole object of their attention, and the light of their "sobering down days." The handsome little boy grew more charming every hour, as he began to run about and talk to everybody; but there was one thing in his disposition that no one could account for; though bold among other little boys, and quite willing and able

to take his own part, he had an indescribable horror of strange grown-up faces. So much so, that when running on before his parents in their walks, if he met a strange man, he would come running back and bury his face at once in his mother's dress, and call out to his papa, in childish accents of terror, "to kill that ugly man." In vain they tried to combat this species of unaccountable panic, in vain did many a stranger speak to him and try to pacify him: at the sight of a stranger the child never could be induced to do otherwise; so, generally, or when they walked out where they were likely to meet people, his mother led him by the hand.

As the boy grew older, this strange dislike to a stranger diminished to some extent, though not entirely; and, without his parents or anyone to attend him, he would repair to the little river, and to some ponds close by, called the clay-pits, to fish in the one for gudgeons, and in the other for tench; and as his going alone rather showed a recovery from the timidity inherent from his birth, his father, Harry Frampton, encouraged him in this proceeding, and when he missed his son, and was told he was gone out fishing, he felt perfectly satisfied, and made no further inquiries. By the time, to which my narrative now refers, Edward Frampton had reached the age of nearly nine years, and he was a fine blue-eyed, fair-haired, stout little fellow, the favourite of all the parishioners. His large, brilliant

blue eyes, seemed, in their purity, to have tinged the whites of them with a slight tint of their own colour, and nothing could be more expressive of good-humour and innocence, than the lineless curve of his singularly happy-looking young face.

It was in the summer time that on one beautiful afternoon this bright little boy, the hope of his parents, and the delight of his neighbours, went as usual with his little rod and fish-basket in hand to fish in a part of the river near his house, and close to the clay-pits before mentioned. The fish he at times caught were always dressed that evening for supper, as he was strictly enjoined to return home before the shades of evening, which he invariably gladly did, in order that the important matter of dressing *his* fish might be complied with. On the evening in question, his father and mother were sitting in the garden at their door, expecting his return; and every noise that proceeded from the path by which they expected him was construed into his approach by the fond and expectant ears of his mother. At first Harry Frampton did not much heed her oftentimes-expressed anxiety; but at last he looked up from the book he was reading, and exclaimed,—

"By Jove! it is getting dark, and no signs of Neddy. I will go and look for him."

Thus saying, he started off for the river; and, as he went, he whistled a peculiar call, by which he was

used to summon the presence of his darling boy. His whistle met with no response ; and he went on and on till it was dark in the search for his only child.

Neither father nor child returning when darkness had set in, I must leave it to the reader to judge of the alarm and anxiety of the poor mother ; but, at last, when late at night, a well-known but hurried step was heard approaching through the stagnant air of a still and clouded night, the mother arose with a thrill of joy to meet her husband and her little son, and fainted dead away when Harry exclaimed, "He's lost ; I cannot find him !"

The rumour of the loss of the village favourite soon spread abroad, and young men went and wandered about the supposed scene of some accident all night ; when, at daybreak on the following morning, something attracted one of the searchers to a deep, narrow clay-pit, filled with water, but in which, as is often the case in clay-pits, the water was as clear as a diamond spark. Even had the mud in and around it been disturbed, an hour's rest would have sufficed to make all clear again. There, cold and lifeless, at the bottom of this clay-hole, lay something like the figure of a boy. Two poles submerged from either side lifted it, but let it sink again, and the fact was then beyond a doubt ; the bright-eyed, handsome, fair-haired little boy had been drowned in this lonely spot. With the usual superstition of boors, the finders of the body let it

alone, and at once sent for the police, and stood, very luckily, very still, till the most efficient county constabulary inspector came to the spot. Fortunately enough, a species of awe had prevented those that had first come from approaching near the bank of the clay-pit, so that all original marks that had at first been there were uninterfered with, the damp, soft clay itself keeping exact models of all impressions. At first the inspector thought as everybody else thought, that the poor child had fallen into the deep water and was accidentally drowned. An innocent child, his father and mother respected by everybody in the vicinity, and the child himself a most popular favourite, what motive could there be for murder? These thoughts were shared in by the inspector of police; but, with the vigilance inculcated by a strict adherence to duty, he took nothing for granted. And as a certain number of people had collected, and many more were coming up, he made all those that had arrived form a ring around the clay-pit, to prevent the tell-tale ground from all immediate innovation, and to link their arms together to keep fresh arrivals in the rear. The first thing that the inspector found was the poor child's fishing-rod, *not in the water,* but a little distance from it, broken in two. The next thing that he and his constables discovered were footsteps on one part of the bank above the water, which certainly were not those of the boy. They were prints of a man's shoe, with the usual com-

plement of nails worn by the country people. In addition to these *shoe* marks, there was *an* impression of a foot without any shoe, but which had been clothed in a stocking. In every instance the mark of this shoeless foot was made by the left foot, and the most minute search could not discover a right foot so clothed. On taking the body from the water and examining it, there were found one or two cuts, as if inflicted by sharp stones, on the face and forehead, while the tops of the fingers were much torn, as if from efforts to lay hold of the rocks or large boulder stones that protruded from the sides of the pit—as if in a struggle for life and death. One cut there was upon the back of the head that accident could not well account for. An inquest was holden, a surgeon examined, and his evidence declared that none of the wounds on the child's head were sufficient to cause death; so an open verdict was arrived at of "Found Drowned." Though the active inspector who had the case in hand could not quarrel with the verdict, his mind nevertheless was by no means satisfied that death had been the result of accident.

Some months passed since the body of the poor child was found in the clay-pit, when Giles Honeyman, a sort of pedler, roving bagman, or traveller, as these people now like to be denominated, after an absence of some months, drove up to the Goat and Compasses, by which name the village inn delighted to call itself; and as he carried in his spring cart all sorts of woollen stuffs,

stockings, caps, and jewelry, he was soon surrounded by many customers, and with some of his friends was refreshing himself with ale in the bar parlour.

"Well," he said, "and how be all the folks round here—Mr. Frampton, and all on 'em? Ho! the day affore I left for the Low Countries I see one as used to live here some years ago. But, my eyes! if I should have know'd him again but for that scowling brow of his. Lord, there! he was dressed amost like a beggar! I do mean Robert Ranghorn. He ain't bettered hisself, surelie! They say as rolling stouns don't gather no moss."

"Oh," replied one of his companions, "we are all right—most of us in these parts—save poor Mr. Frampton and his lady. They have never recovered the loss of their little boy, who was found drowned in one of the clay-pits out yonder by the hill near the river, on the 5th day of September last."

"The 5th of September last?—Drowned in the clay-pits! Why, 'twas there, in the afternoon of that day, of that month, as I see Robert Ranghorn a-flinging stones at summat in the water beneath him, and a-damning of it because it wouldn't go down."

These words were scarce out of the travelling bagman's mouth, when up jumped the intelligent farmer who had been drinking beer with him, and, taking him by the arm, he led him as if to say a few words to him in private at the door; but once there, in breathless

haste he took him up to Harry Frampton's house. What they did there, or what took place there, we must leave to be told in another chapter. Their conference with Harry Frampton was of some duration, and at the close of it, Frampton prepared himself for an immediate journey.

CHAPTER II.

THE active and most efficient superintendent of the county constabulary, whose vigilance had been called in in the first instance to investigate the facts relating to the finding of the body of the little boy in the clay-pit, supposed to have been accidentally drowned, was in bed at his station about midnight, when one of the constables aroused him up, saying that, "A gentleman —Mr. Frampton—who was most anxious to see him—desired an instantaneous interview."

Hastily dressing himself, the superintendent desired him to be shown up. Harry Frampton then entered the room, closing the door behind him with care, as if to preclude the possibility of what he had to say being heard by anybody else. So changed was Harry Frampton in demeanor and looks, that the police officer, at the first glance, doubted his identity; and then, when he had made him out, looked upon him as utterly beside his senses. There was madness in every feature.

"What is the matter?" said the officer. "Mr. Frampton, what have you to communicate?"

At this question, Harry Frampton turned full upon the questioner, his eyes absolutely seeming to flash fire; his teeth were set firmly together, his hands clenched, and his whole frame convulsed with fury.

"For heaven's sake, Mr. Frampton," said the officer, "calm yourself, and tell me what *is* the matter?"

"Murder, murder!" was the reply, in a hissing, condensed whisper, delivered close to the officer's ear; then he cried aloud, "Ranghorn, Ranghorn!" and he paused again, rolling his blood-shot eyes as if they would start from their sockets.

"Try, sir—try to be calm; these bursts of fury can do no good," said the officer, "while at the same time violence may mar the whole affair. What reason have you to suppose that——"

"Calm, calm! Reason to suppose? Calm!" looking at the officer as if the officer himself had been the murderer. "Reason to suppose? *Why I know it;*—I ought to have known it from the first. 'Tis done! 'Twas he, that bird of hell, 'twas he. Whose hand else could it have been? But the world's extent shall be too small to hide him from my vengeance. My boy, my boy, my murdered boy!" And for a moment he burst into an agony of tears; but then, dashing his arm across his eyes, he strode up and down the room with frantic gestures.

The calm and observant officer at once saw that there was no use in speaking to a man in this state of mental agony, so watching till the fit was over, the officer stood silently meditating upon the possibility of his suspicions being correct, inclining as they did to those, or nearly those, which he in the first instance had entertained. At last poor Harry Frampton threw himself into a chair, and again burst into tears.

The officer, glad to see the tears, and at once taking advantage of the softer mood, again entreated him to be calm, saying that "The law would assuredly overtake Ranghorn if he were guilty."

The word *if* again threw Frampton into a state of insanity.

"If!" he cried. "The law—if, if! But curses on the slow, cold law. I want *no* law—I'll have *no* law! These hands, these hands alone!"

Then suddenly throwing himself on his knees before the officer could prevent him, he swore the most fearful oaths, "That he would seek no law—nor have any law; nor would he rest day nor night till, with his own hands, he had avenged the blood of his murdered child!"

Apparently he would have continued to heap oath upon oath to bind himself body and soul to the revenge of the murder, but the officer seized him round the waist, and, lifting him from his knees with one arm,

while with the other hand he stopped his mouth, he pressed him into a chair.

"Listen, sir, to me," said the officer; "you *must* be calm, such violent conduct as this may altogether frustrate our object, and thwart the best endeavours to trace this atrocious villain."

It seemed, then, that the last words, as to the "tracing of the murderer," had the desired effect, for Frampton suddenly ceased from his violence; but the officer was rather in doubt as to whether he did so to deceive him, or whether really from conviction in the truth of the observation. In a moment, Frampton became wonderfully calm, and to use the officer's own words, "he who had hitherto been like a hungry tiger raging for his prey, had now become mild and gentle as a lamb."

"To trace him, *to make sure of him*," said Frampton; "tell me *that* again; persuade me but of *that*, and you shall lead me like a child."

"Well, sir, a very few words will illustrate my meaning. Secresy, sir, and an apparent absence of suspicion, are indispensable to insure success."

Though Frampton seemed to acquiesce in all that the officer had ultimately urged, there was, nevertheless, or the officer thought that he saw that there was, a sullen, dogged determination to Lynch Law on the supposed murderer with his own hands. As it was, however, Frampton at the time kept his word, and refrained

from any more violent demonstrations; but the keen eye of the protector of the public peace could not help suspecting that he saw a flash of the eye, a curl of the lip, as if betokening that in the innermost heart of the aggrieved parent there was a desperate meditation of wrenching from the law its just and terrible prerogative, and of avenging the blood of his innocent boy with his own retributive hands. Having become thus calm, Frampton then narrated to the officer the grounds on which he charged Ranghorn with the murder, telling him that a travelling pedler had given some important information, and that the pedler had promised to remain at Frampton's house until his return, therefore he wished the inspector at once to go back with him to his house. At the dark hour of an autumn morning, then, the inspector set off with Frampton for his house, the former not a little pleased that darkness should screen the fact of his official presence.

On arriving at Frampton's, just before daylight, they found the pedler seated in a chair by the fire, fast asleep, when, having awakened him, the officer at once recognised him as an industrious man, in the habit of going the rounds of that and the adjacent counties with wares of various kinds for sale; and on taking his departure not the trace or shadow of a doubt was left but that Ranghorn, under circumstances of great cruelty, had been the murderer of the poor little innocent child.

After the pedler's statement had been received, he was then enjoined by the officer not to open his lips to anyone on the matter, but on that or the following morning to drive to the officer's house with his stock of goods, a thing he had often done before, and therefore it would in no way awaken suspicion. The pedler was a willing witness, for he was much distressed at the melancholy event. The child had been a great favourite with him, and he was anxious to tell all he knew of the matter, and willing to undergo any personal inconvenience in assisting to bring the murderer to justice. On the pedler's arriving at the inspector's house, a magistrate, whose presence there had been requested, was in readiness, and the deposition being taken in due form, and a warrant issued, the next thing the officer had to do was to apprehend the accused.

Two things seemed now the one as certain as the other. The term of Ranghorn's transportation had expired, and having returned to England, he was the murderer of the little boy; but then the question arose, where was the culprit to be found? Versed, as he was, in every evasion of the law, England, Ireland, and Scotland offered him a wide ambush for concealment. Rumour had *positively asserted* that he would *never return* to the United Kingdom, but the identification of the man by the pedler put an end to that supposition, and elicited an important fact.

Matters continued thus for four months; even Frampton, as well as the officer who had charge of the case, began to despair, when the post, one morning, brought the officer the following letter. I give a verbatim copy.

"SIR,

"I am glad to inform you that the man you are looking for is in custody in this town. You had better lose no time in coming here, as he is only sent to gaol for a week, for cutting a couple of young ash trees in a gentleman's plantation near this; he gave his name as James M'Guire. I happened to be in the court, where I was waiting to speak to a good customer of mine, who was sitting upon the bench, and I knew the villain the moment I saw him; but I said nothing when I found that he was sent to gaol for a week. There's no doubt in life but he's the man; make no delay, and I'll wait here till you come, or until I get a letter from you.

"Your obedient servant,

"* * *"

The officer started off, on the strength of this letter, by the very next coach; and at the end of ten days he had the satisfaction of seeing Robert Ranghorn in the county gaol, to which he was fully committed for the murder of Edward Frampton.

The day of trial at length arrived; and when Rang-

horn was arraigned, he pleaded "Not guilty," in rather a bold and confident tone, arising, perhaps, from utter ignorance that the only or immediate witness against him, the pedler, was then and there in court. On hearing the pedler's name whispered on the Crown side of the bar, he turned ashy pale, his lips lost their hue and quivered, and he leaned against the rails of the dock for support.

The witnesses were few. Frampton proved the finding of the body and the identification of its being his son. The inspector, who was the next witness, proved the marks of the shoes, and of a left foot with nothing on but a stocking. The pedler, the most important witness of all, was then sworn and examined. "Had known the prisoner at the bar for some years, when he was a gentleman, and when he wasn't. Had seen him in the same house as Mr. Frampton some years ago. On the 15th of September last, late in the evening, he was travelling in the neighbourhood of Mr. Frampton's house, a mile, or perhaps more, from it. The place was called Crossdeen. Saw a man standing over what appeared to be an old sand or clay-pit, or quarry hole, inside a hedge-row to the right of the road. There was a stiff bit of a hill at the place, and as he, the witness, pulled up his horse into a walk, he saw the man throw several stones down into the hole, and heard him say, 'D—— you, will you never go down?' The man's back was towards him at this

time, so he, the witness, called out, 'Halloo, lad, what's the matter?' The man, the prisoner at the bar, without turning round, replied. 'That it was a dog of his own, which had torn one of his neighbour's sheep, and he was afraid, if he did not destroy it, he would get into trouble.' The prisoner then walked on, at quick pace, inside the hedge, but he did not run, and he came out upon the road at a gap. By this time, he, the witness, had mounted the hill, and getting on again at a quicker pace, came within about fifteen or twenty yards of the man as he jumped out at the gap, and crossed the road. Had a full view of him, and at once recognised the prisoner, the man whom he now identified. Observed that the prisoner *had not any shoes on as he crossed the road*, but he had stockings on. Saw one shoe under the prisoner's left arm. It was the arm next him. He might, or might not, have had another shoe under his right arm. At the time, it did not occur to him to doubt that what the prisoner had told him about the dog was true, and therefore he went his way. When he returned from the Low Countries, and heard of the little boy's death, and the place where the body was found, he at once gave all the evidence in his power. The place where the body of the boy was found, had since been pointed out to him, and it was the same at which the prisoner stood when he threw the stones."

I will not fatigue my readers with the cross-examina-

tion of this witness, it being of the usual routine of hopeless questions in a hopeless case. Such as "How ar off were you from the prisoner when you say you saw him?" "Did you measure the distance; if not, then how, sir, can you take on yourself to swear that you *were* fifteen yards from that poor man at the bar? Do you know the obligations of an oath? Do you know, sir, that you may mislead those twelve honest jurymen in *that* box, and make them falsify their oaths? Now, sir, take care what you say—on your oath, sir, *how* do you know that man?"

The foregoing is about the gist of professional brow-beating in a hopeless case; and the aim of those really ridiculous questions is to confuse an honest truth-telling brain, that has not the wit or the assurance to reply in very few words—in the "I do," or "I do not." The question of "How do you know a man?" is answered very shortly, "*By my eyes.*" "How do your eyes know him?" "By his looks."

"Take care, sir, what you say; I ask you on your solemn oath, with the terrible fact of perjury hanging over your head, will you take on yourself to swear that the prisoner at the bar was the man you saw?"

"To the best of my belief, *he was.*"

"Oh, sir, to the best of your belief is it? Then you won't *swear* to the fact that the prisoner *was* the man?"

"Brother Colliflower," says the judge, looking up

from his notes, "the witness swears to the best of his belief, and the law requires no more. Witness, answer me this question. Are you sure, out of your own knowledge, that the prisoner at the bar *is* the man whom you saw in the act you have described?"

"I am, my lord."

The judge casts a sidelong glance at Brother Colliflower, and Colliflower subsides into his seat.

The next witness examined in this trial was one Peter Tully. He stated that he was a shoemaker by trade, and lived about half a mile from the place described by the last witness. Knew that the body was found; knew the prisoner Robert Ranghorn. Remembered the morning when the body was found. Was bringing home a pair of shoes the evening before, which shoes had been left to be mended. Met the prisoner upon a pathway through a cornfield. Corn was late, and breast-high. Met the prisoner face to face; he had no shoes on at the time, but had stockings. Had one shoe under his arm. "'My stars! is this you, Robert?' says I. 'It is, Peter,' says he; 'but *you need not let on*. Have you an old shoe,' says he, 'that would match that?' 'I've no old shoes,' says I; 'no old ones except what belongs to customers, but I'll make you a pair.' Says the prisoner, says he, 'that's live horse, and you'll get grass.' The prisoner took the shoes out of his hand and looked at them. *Offered* one of them to the sole of his foot, and said

they were too small. Asked him what had become of his other shoe, and he replied 'that it was burned.' The prisoner then left him, and when he had crossed the first ditch, began to run. Witness had never seen him since until this day."

The usual attempt to confound the truth in cross-examination by a clever advocate, then followed, but without success. No witnesses were called for the defence, and the case for the Crown then closed. The judge charged the jury in the space of half an hour; the jury retired, and in less than ten minutes returned into their box in the usual profound silence that reigns in a case of life or death. The noise over of resuming their seats, and answering to their names, every head, from bench to gallery, leaned forward in breathless silence to catch the important word; after a few hish, his—h—h— from the sheriff, by way of preliminary to the hearing of that for which every ear was open, and every lip, nay, breath silent, the clerk asked the usual question, and in a firm and decided tone the foreman pronounced the word "Guilty!" The black cap then assumed, the sentence of the law was passed, to be carried into effect on *that day three weeks.*

Why or for what reason this unusual delay was assigned, no one could tell. The last sentence of the law was usually carried out in a much shorter time.

There is no greater mistake throughout the jurisprudence of the United Kingdom than this lapse of

time permitted between the hopelessly convicted criminal and the day of execution. In all cases of crime punishment should follow as close as possible on the day of condemnation. If this were the case, maudlin and erring sensibility would not have time to get up useless prayers for pardon; and the villain, aware of punishment certain and sure to follow close on the heels of crime, would stand far more in awe of the offended laws of heaven and of man than it is very evident is at present found to be the case.

In the case to which I am now alluding, it was supposed by the public that this unusual time between sentence and execution was given for some ulterior object connected with the prisoner, who, no doubt, during his confinement had been tampering with priest, chaplain, and visiting magistrate, in order to make them believe that he was possessed of some secret most important to be divulged, and the revealment of which he made contingent on the sparing of his life.

Nothing can stay time! The condemned criminal, as well as the lover, finds that the old Mower runs too fast—as fast at one end of the stick as at the other;—and thus the three weeks assigned for the execution fled, and the last six days were now begun.

The visiting justice of the gaol, on two different occasions, had repaired to the office of the Secretary of State after having had interviews with the prisoner;

and rumour became very busy that the condemned man had it in his power to make some important disclosures, though what the nature of these disclosures were never transpired; neither sheriff, gaoler, nor the police knew anything about them, while sensible people smiled and said the magistrate had only found a marc's nest with eggs in it, placed by the prisoner to purchase time. On one occasion, the superintendent of the constabulary was in the condemned cell when the magistrate was having a long conversation with Ranghorn, but in an under or whispering tone, and the following broken sentences or disjointed words from the magistrate, as addressed to the prisoner, reached his ear.

"Cannot be more particular—decided—not authorised — positive, strongly recommend — all in my power."

Then from the prisoner the following:

"I—I could be sure—disgrace—informer—die after all—say you'll do it; sworn by Heaven to be true—save me—tell all in both cases. God help me!"

Then at the conclusion of this conversation with the justice, Ranghorn threw himself back on his bedstead, and *appeared* to faint. Though the magistrate regarded this apparent exhaustion through excess of feeling with complacency, the superintendent of the county constabulary looked upon it as nothing more than shamming for the purpose of imposition. In a

short time Ranghorn arose from his bedstead, having thrown off all his supposed inclination to faint away, and turning sulky, and clasping his hands firmly one upon the other on the crown of his head, he commenced hurriedly to pace backwards and forwards in his cell.

The magistrate and the superintendent retired.

"That man," said the officer, "wishes you to believe that he can divulge certain important matters; but he will *not* do so, unless with a positive promise of pardon, or at least, of mitigation."

"He does," replied the magistrate. "But I can make him no promise; nor will the Government promise the interference of the Crown simply on vague innuendos. I am quite positive that he has knowledge of certain facts most important for the Government to know; but as that is mere matter of opinion, it is useless in any attempt to obtain mitigation. However, I go to town by this night's mail for a last interview with the Secretary of State, and I will see what can be done; not entirely without the hope that the last day's post may bring a reprieve. See the convict again this evening, and tell him from me that I am gone to see the Home Secretary; and implore him to make an unconditional disclosure of all he knows. And should he do so, as from the softened feeling he evinced I think he will, write to me to the Home Office to-morrow, and *watch the post for a reply*."

"There is very little of softened feeling about this criminal, of that I am sure," said the superintendent to himself. "He is only imposing on the justice." Then accompanying the justice to see him off on his journey, in case he should have any further instructions to give, the superintendent returned to the gaol and to the prisoner's cell.

On entering the cell, the officer found the condemned man in a very different state of mind from that in which he was but a few hours before, when in conversation with the magistrate, which confirmed him more than ever in the opinion that he had been shamming, and really had nothing of importance to divulge.

He said, "he would tell nothing; that the old beak was only deceiving him for his own purposes, and that he was a bloody-minded man." These words he followed up with a tirade about never turning evidence; that he had made up his mind to die, and cared for nothing. Then he snapped his fingers, though loud and rapidly, yet nervously, and walked about his cell, attempting to whistle. All this outward show of dogged obstinacy and devil-may-care spirit was overdone however, and the officer saw that he would have told anything, if he had anything really to tell that would save his life.

"Well," said the officer, "the justice is gone to see the Home Secretary, as I told you. I saw him off by the mail."

"He might have saved himself the trouble," replied the prisoner, with an assumption of hardihood in his manner. Then after a pause, in an anxious tone of voice he asked, when the justice would be back?

"That is uncertain," replied the officer; "but he is gone to do all he can in your behalf, though you did not treat him with the confidence best for you, on which account I think all his representations will be in vain."

On hearing this, Ranghorn looked put out or disappointed, and regarding the officer for some seconds, he exclaimed, "It's all over. Why did the justice go away—why did he not stay? I would have told him all, hoping only for the mercy of God and the sparing of my life."

"It is not too late to make a clean breast," replied the officer; "you may tell me anything you wish, and I will address it to the magistrate at the Home Office, whither he has desired me to write, and then see you again in the morning."

To this the only reply the prisoner made was, "Why did he go, why did he go? What can he do?—'tis all over," on hearing which the officer felt quite convinced that he really had nothing important to confess. This took place on the Wednesday evening, and the execution was fixed for the following Saturday morning. The night's mail had left, so that a letter

from the officer to the magistrate could not go till the next day, and would not reach its destination till the following Friday. There was time however for a reply, when, though matters were just as the magistrate had left them, the officer wrote a full account of what passed, and then retired to bed.

On the following day the convict was in a very sulky and savage state of mind, unwilling to hold converse with any one but the police officer, the gaoler reporting that he was constantly muttering to himself about "traitors," and "dying true," so that there was nothing to add to what had been previously reported.

By the post of Friday morning the magistrate wrote from London to say, that he feared the law must take its course, for the Home Secretary could see no just grounds on which to recommend any remission of sentence, and that the judge who passed the sentence, having been communicated with, could in no way speak in the culprit's favour, nor could the Attorney-General find anything in the circumstantial evidence but what was conclusive as to the prisoner's guilt. Another meeting at the Home Office had been fixed for three o'clock on Friday, but from the lateness of the hour named he was not disposed to expect any intention to interfere with the execution. He himself at all events would be back by the mail on the Saturday morning.

On this, the Friday evening, about seven o'clock, the

officer was proceeding to the gaol, when he met the chaplain coming forth, in a most disturbed state of mind. He was weeping when he saw the officer, and throwing up his hands and his eyes he exclaimed, "God pardon that unhappy man. I have been, sir," he continued, "for the last two hours with the convict; and though he has given up all hopes of a reprieve, that has in no way turned his thoughts to attempting to make his peace with Heaven. All I could urge on that head only made him worse, and drove him to quite a ferocious state of mind, in which it was impossible to bring him to repentance. He has not only confessed the murder of the poor innocent child to me, and to the gaolers also, but he has boasted of it with the most savage or insane delight, and gloried in the fact of rendering the parents childless. Towards Mrs. Frampton, the mother of the boy, he has expressed a most terrible and vindictive feeling, saying that all he regretted was she had not been with the boy, for if she had he would have killed her also. He raves upon this point, and at times attributes the state he is in to her, and cries out that he had been educated and made for better things, but that her heartless tampering with his best, his first and only affection, and her flirtations, as he calls them, up to the moment when she gave herself to his rival, drove him mad. I think," continued the chaplain, "that the man has lost his reason, and that it is an awful thing to hurry him into eternity in such a state."

The chaplain and the officer were then proceeding a few steps in company, when a messenger came up behind them in some haste to say that "the officer was wanted at the gaol."

Wishing the chaplain good night, the superintendent immediately obeyed the summons. The murderer had expressed a wish to see him. On the door of the cell being opened, "You may retire," said the officer to the turnkey.

"He may *stay* where he *is*," cried the convict, in a loud tone; "what I have to say the world may hear, and the world *shall* hear to-morrow."

Then turning to the officer, he asked if the magistrate had returned from London; to this the officer replied "that he had not."

"Have you written to him?"

"I have."

"Humph!" said the convict; "had there been any good news you wouldn't have waited to be sent for. You keep away because the news is bad; it's like the cowardice of the world. It's all over now; I'll show you—I'll show the world—and I'll show Harry Frampton, if he's not afraid to look, what Robert Ranghorn *can* do. He knows, to his sorrow, what I *have* done already. Had I killed him when we were both armed, there would have been none of this; if he had killed me, as I besought him to do, when he had me at his mercy, there would have been none of this, and his boy

would have been alive now. I murdered his son; I saw the beseeching, yet terrified blue eyes of the drowning boy; I heard his cries for mercy; but he, the father, had no mercy *for me*, when he took away my bride that ought to have been. Nor had she any, either. Beyond the seas I was lucky; I might have been rich and become respectable, but for the one longing throb of hatred at my heart, to return and revenge my wrongs. Thousands of miles I have come the rolling ocean over, for revenge upon my foe; and *I have had it!* If that coward Frampton dares to stand among the crowd to-morrow to gloat over my death, before the world to his chicken face I'll tell it, that he was always a creeping rascal, supplanting better men through lies, hypocrisy, and underhand dealing, afraid to meet them in open trial. 'Ranghorn, Ranghorn, mercy!' indeed. Down, down! See the stare upon his upturned face; see the bubbles of his struggling breath; and then the rising mud. Ha! ha! ha! Mercy, indeed! where was their mercy upon me?" Then bursting into an hysterical fit, the murderer threw himself on the floor.

Sickened with the sight, though such scenes were not entirely new to him, the officer turned to leave the cell, when the convict starting up, with wonderful composure said to him, "Sir, listen to me. I have this only consolation left me; Harry Frampton, if *he dares to witness* my execution, shall hear from my lips that I

murdered his son. You may tell him, too, that after the murder of his boy, he swore an oath never to wait for the law; that the law should never overtake me, *his* vengeance should outstrip it; and that he would never rest, day nor night, until with his own hands he had paid the debt he owed me for the crime I had committed. I paid the debt honestly, and with interest, that *I owed to him.* I *know* he swore *that* oath; it was his boast; just like him, 'twas but a boast. I didn't fear him, for had he tried to compass my death, except from some dark corner, which is just what he would have done, the father as well as the son should have died by my hand. Tell him, then, *he's foiled.* I know he fears, and will *not meet me face to face* to-morrow. He'd fear even to look at me to-morrow, tied and pinioned though I be; his dastard soul would quail before me,—robber and coward that he is." With these words the culprit sank exhausted on his bed.

Leaving him in that state, and shocked at his vindictive state of mind, but at the same time still more convinced than ever, that in reality he had no important disclosures to make, no real dislike to turn evidence against others; for the mind of the culprit showed itself in so horrible a phase, that the man possessing it was evidently not averse to any iniquity.

His accusation against Frampton as to *his* being capable of taking a skulking revenge upon him, too, was out of the question; for he had admitted that when

Frampton, in their combat with sharpened foils, had had him down and at his mercy, he even then abstained from, and refused at his request to take his life. The atrocious villain, who out of revenge could murder an unoffending child, without the power to protect itself, was not a reliable source on which to believe the cowardice of another. To judge between the two, there could not be a doubt as to which was the greatest coward.

The officer had not long returned home when Mrs. Frampton sent in word that she desired to see him; she was admitted at once. Alas! she was no longer the "Susan" of earlier days, but every line of what had once been a sweetly smooth and pretty face, was graven deep with the lines of sorrow.

"I have come to see you," she began, "upon the state of my poor suffering husband; he has been of late much distracted in mind, but suddenly so great a calm has come over him, that I know not what to think of it. Pray, sir," she said, "come and see him, and if you can, dissuade him from attending the execution to-morrow, for on doing so his whole soul seems to be now bent. If he attends *that* execution," she continued, "something, I know, will happen. So, aid me, aid me, to keep him from it, if you can?" She added, "She was sure he contemplated some desperate act, and that that alone was the cause of his apparent calmness; when, if the officer saw him, and found

reason for his interference, perhaps he would have him taken into custody till the execution was over."

On this the superintendent told her to return home immediately, but not to say anything about her having seen him: so she went on her way.

About nine o'clock that evening the officer went to Frampton's lodgings, and on being admitted found him just risen from his supper, and quietly cleaning a double gun, which had been left rusty for some length of time. He was not in the least state of excitement, but perfectly composed, which completely agreed with the statement of Mrs. Frampton.

"Well, Mr. Frampton," the officer said, "though I have been very busy all day, yet I could not resist, even at this late hour, just looking in to see how you were, well knowing the sufferings you have had to go through."

"Thank you, my good friend," replied Frampton; "I am much better; true, I have been far from well all day; I could not help fretting; but what is the use of it, it can do no good, so I won't fret any more if I can help it."

"Well," rejoined the officer, "that is a very sensible light in which to regard the matter, and I hope you will not give way any more to vain excitement; it will soon be all over, and you ought to banish from your mind all malice and ill-will towards the culprit, about to forfeit his life to the offended majesty of the law."

"I've tried it. I've tried it," replied Frampton, with startling vehemence; "I've tried to forgive that man; I've nearly broken my heart in trying to do it; but *I can't—I can't*—it's no use trying. Oh, my boy, my fair-haired, blue-eyed boy, my darling, murdered boy!" Then dashing the back of his hand across his eyes, he became as calm as possible. There was, however, a nameless something about him, observable to the practised eye of the officer, so calm, so self-possessed, so deep and still, that, on remembering the account so recently given him of his violent state by Mrs. Frampton, the officer was not quite satisfied that he saw behind the scenes. He thought, too, that he noticed on the lip of Frampton a lurking resemblance to a very bitter smile of a former period, shown at the commencement of this unhappy affair; on this account the officer resolved at once to come to a definite explanation.

"Mr. Frampton," said the inspector, "you cannot, of course, intend to witness the execution?"

"I *did* intend to mingle in the crowd," he replied; "but I have almost changed my mind. I witnessed the finding of the body of my darling boy; do you wish me to deny myself the satisfaction, poor and inadequately miserable as it is, of seeing the execution of *his* murderer?"

"I do wish it, my dear Mr. Frampton; and I tell you fairly it cannot, and it *shall not be*. You

shall *not* be amongst those who witness *that* execution."

"Well, be it so," he answered, with considerable composure; "you know best what is for my good, and you have ever been kind and attentive; but oh, remember the——"

"Stop, sir," rejoined the officer, seeing a slight inclination to excitement; "you must pledge me your solemn word of honour that *you will not be amongst the crowd of roughs and others*, who will be assembled to witness the execution to-morrow. If you do not give me this pledge, as a gentleman and man of honour, I candidly tell you that you must be kept away, and that you will be taken in charge."

"I give you my word of honour, then, *that I will not join the crowd* to see the execution. Humph!" and the bitter smile, for an instant, curled his lip again; "'twould be but a poor satisfaction, not worth having after the oath I have sworn, to *see* the villain hanged. 'Twould only tell me that I had slept upon my vow, and remind me that my lips were perjured, though my hands were clean. 'Tis past, then. I give you the solemn pledge you require."

"Enough, sir," replied the officer, "I shall then depend upon your word."

"You may; for my determination *is fixed;* and I promise you faithfully and truly, *that it will not alter.*"

The officer then retired, and from his previous knowledge of Frampton, he felt he would keep his word.

It was strange in the jurisprudence of those days, and in every point remarkable, that up to that late period in the night before the execution, and that, too, when the gaol was finally closed, and the horrible preparations for death set up, and all within the prison walls, save, perhaps, the miserable culprit himself, wrapped in sound sleep, that no executioner's services had been engaged, and the Calcraft of those days had not been summoned to attend, and to sleep in the prison as had been customary on such occasions. All too late, the fact imminent, this omission had struck the sheriff's dilatory mind, and with the alternative before his eyes of acting executioner himself, he would have given almost any sum of money for any man to relieve him of the unpleasant position.

One official acted in the double capacity of governor and gaoler in those days, and from the sheriff he had had especial instructions, and by order had despatched an express in search of a man accustomed to carry out the last sentence of the law, and to procure his immediate presence. The messenger had not yet returned, and the gaoler himself had, therefore, received direct orders from the sheriff, in case the difficulty should continue, to procure the services of any man, on any terms, however high, if one could only be found to do the duty.

It was about the first hour of a dark and gloomy morning, when the feeble ray of a misty moon, for a moment, threw a transient light on the hard grey walls of the prison, and the gusty, wild wind moaned in hollow and in dying murmurs through the iron bars, as if in mockery to meet the deeper sighs of doomed and despairing wretches, that had no freedom in them, that the outer turnkey and watchman of the gaol, perceived a man muffled in a large over-coat, wearing a low-crowned hat, pulled down on his face, pass several times to and fro in front of the gate. The man appeared to look cautiously about him in all directions, but at length, coming nearer, he stopped directly beneath the gallows, and, having looked at it for some moments, he stamped his foot upon the ground, and, in a concentrated whisper, between his teeth, emphatically pronounced the word, "*Never!*" He then walked away, and again stamping his foot, pronounced the word "Coward!" on which he turned and came on at once up to the gate.

"Who goes there?" challenged the watch.

"I wish to speak to the gaoler," replied the man.

"You can't see him," rejoined the watchman; "it is past all hours for communication. If you give your name, and say what your business is, I might then be a better judge as to whether I ought to call the gaoler or not. Will you do so?"

"No; my business is with the gaoler, and to him it is of considerable importance, and I will tell no one else. Mind, if you refuse me an interview with the chief functionary in the prison, you must take the consequence, and the blame of your act on yourself,—I simply demand an interview."

The turnkey's suspicion was then at once aroused; he knew the strait the sheriff was in for the want of an executioner; and the wish for concealment, natural in that most useful functionary, inasmuch as the calling was not, and is not, a popular one; so he resolved to acquaint the gaoler at least with the stranger's presence.

Personal and immediate wishes often dispose the mind of man to spring to sudden conclusions, and the gaoler, expecting one of the fraternity, at once supposed that a carrier-out of the last sentence had arrived, and, dressing himself as quickly as possible, he hurried to the gate. As a necessary precaution, however, he took a survey of the stranger through the small side window, and, having satisfied himself that he was alone, and appeared to be unarmed, he desired him to be admitted and shown into the waiting-room. On entering, the man seemed a little nervous and excited, and careful not to remove the muffling from his face. This, the gaoler was not surprised at; on the contrary, it confirmed him at once as to the business of the stranger. "It's their trick," he thought to himself,

"more from habit than real timidity;" so closing the door, he asked the man "his business."

"There's a criminal to be executed to-day," (it was then nearly two in the morning,) "is there not; and there's great need for some one to do it?"

The gaoler admitted the fact; and being glad that that difficulty had a prospect of being overcome, he hoped that the person he spoke to had come to say he could procure an officiater. While he said this, he eyed, as he called him, "his customer all over;" for there was something about him that did not look like a man who would do the business himself.

"No," said the stranger, in reply to the foregoing question, "I know of none except I perform the office myself."

"Well, then," said the gaoler, "are you up to the business; and what are your terms for the job?"

"My terms are these—all that you have to do with —to be permitted to examine the machine for turning off the murderer, and to be asked no further questions."

"But what as to payment in cash—what are your terms as to that?"

"I have been paid in advance for what I am to perform, and I require nothing more."

"You have seen the sheriff, then?" remarked the gaoler.

"I may have; but the consideration for which I

have come here has been supplied by another hand. Be quick! accept my services or I am gone!"

The gaoler again eyed his companion closely from head to foot, for there was that about him which did not suggest his being an officiater in the last dread sentence of the law. But though he was not exactly the stamp of the man so urgently required, nor one whom he would have chosen—had he any choice in the matter—there seemed to the gaoler no alternative but to accept the proffered services, the more so as they had been already paid for. "It's the sheriff's man," he thought to himself; "so, my friend, follow me."

Taking a lantern in his hand, the gaoler led the way to the "press-room," an apartment about fourteen feet square. From the centre of this chamber, on each side a small, strong iron door, thickly studded with large round knobs, showed the entrance into two smaller rooms. To the rear, looking into the gaol-yard, was a small window, strongly barred, and there were eight stone steps leading to the temporary platform or "drop." To these steps there was an iron handrail, to support those who required it in the ascent; and hanging on the end of one of these rails, ready for use, hung a coil of strong hempen rope, with a hook at one end. To the immediate right of the steps was a large, iron wheel, with a handle to one of the spokes, and near the outward rim.

The machinery by which this wheel was connected

with the bolts that sustained the drop outside, and on which it acted, was beneath the steps, and could not then be immediately examined. The bolts were set; and the gaoler standing beside the wheel where the executioner would have to stand, instructed his companion that on a given signal from the sheriff he had simply to lay hold of the handle and turn the wheel from him to cause the drop to fall and launch the culprit into eternity.

He also showed him a roll of penny cord hanging on an iron hook, for the purpose of binding the arms of the condemned man behind his back. All this the gaoler explained to his companion, having still some doubts if he was really up to the work he had been paid to do.

As they were about to return,—

"There," said the gaoler, pointing to one of the small rooms before mentioned, "there's a bed in that room you can have, and I will send you your breakfast at the right time."

"Not for the sheriff's wealth and yours together," exclaimed the man, with startling emphasis. "Had I supposed I was to have slept here, I should have made it a part of my terms—and those terms have not been very exorbitant — to have been permitted to depart and return again at daybreak. If you don't concede this point to me, I'll have nothing farther to do with the matter."

"I fear you are deceiving me," said the gaoler, with a ghastly grin of apprehension. "You may be a friend of the convict's, and your only purpose to delay the execution. I doubt you; you are not like a man accustomed to the thing."

"You need not fear," replied the man; "I'm *not* a friend of the convict. I'll be plain with *you*. I'm not accustomed to the thing—few men *are*. But I'll make no mistake; and I'll go through with it if I have life. Let me depart; accept my services; no earthly thing shall prevent my returning at daybreak!"

The gaoler then thought it best to humour the stranger; but when retired to his luke-warm bed, he mentally resolved that if any other customer should turn up, he would accept his services as well as those that had thus been offered, for he was still perplexed with doubt and apprehension as to all being "on the square."

No other person, however, offered his services, nor could any one be heard of in any direction; and the stranger, punctual to his word, returned to officiate in the matter. The gaoler in the oddest way imaginable eyeing him from head to foot, and fascinated with every movement of his person, following him about as if he were his shadow, and stopping every minute to scratch his head in an agony of perplexity.

"Time and the hour" do indeed "go through the roughest day," and a clouded sun broke fitfully on the

walls of the prison with a faint and yellow or ghastly and suppressed beam, as if the light itself tried not to shine upon deeds in prisons. The morning broke then on Robert Ranghorn—the last upon which he would ever look again — a just and an inevitable doom.

The magistrate had not returned from his interview at the Home Office ; but there were letters for the chief of the police and for the sheriff. These letters stated that up to the moment of writing—a quarter of an hour before the mail started—nothing decisive had been arrived at as to a reprieve ; but all hopes of it were not *quite* gone. It seemed that Ranghorn had made some communications as to outrages in which he had been concerned, and these were sent to the office of the Clerk of the Crown for consideration. The sheriff, in this communication from the magistrate, had been requested to delay the execution to the last possible moment, as if a reprieve were too late for the post, an express should be dispatched to make all haste to *reach the gaol in time ;* a relay of horses was in readiness all down the road.

According to the prison instructions, the gaol bell rang at noon ; and the hour appointed for the execution was deemed to have arrived. From a very early hour in the morning vast numbers of people had collected together, and their numbers kept on increas-

ing; for the cold-blooded murder of a little innocent child is not looked upon with any approbation even by thieves and roughs of every description, and of both sexes, and there was a wide and general desire that in this case the law should take its course. Walls, gates, windows, houses, and their roofs, were crowded with an anxious multitude; and men, women, girls, and boys were jostling each other, and enacting obscene jests, by way of an appropriate method of passing the time. Some portions of the people had come from anxiety to see what they had never seen before; others from a morbid inclination to witness horrors, while a few desired only to witness the guilt of a murderer expiated by a violent and disgraceful death. Scarce any stood there with the regretful and mild dislike to pain and misery inculcated by true religion; but, for all this, I am by no means sure that a public expiation of the worst of crimes is not of greater benefit than the more modern act of execution done within the walls of a prison, in secret conclave, as if the law was ashamed of capital punishment.

It had now tolled the hour of one—an hour past the prescribed time. The door from the press-room stood open; one end of the rope was fastened to a pulley some two or three feet above the platform, while the other end passed into the press-room out of sight. With every gust of wind the rope swung to and fro, and with every jerk of it a hollow murmur rose among

the crowd of "He's coming!" to subside again in disappointment. At last the patience of the crowd became exhausted, and there were loud cries to "Bring him out, bring him out!" "Sheriff, sheriff, do your duty!" "Let us go home.—Shame to keep us here.—You've nobody to hang; he's escaped!"

At last one surging uproar from the multitude, and then a profound silence;—the culprit and the executioner had come forth, the cap on his head, but not pulled down; the cords on the arms, and the fatal noose, all had been adjusted; the executioner retired, and the chaplain and an assistant clergyman stood on either side the doomed man, and the former addressed the crowd:—

"My friends," the chaplain called out, "the unhappy man before you, now standing on the brink of eternity, is anxious to address his hearers. Hear what he has to say; they will be the last words he will ever utter!"

At the conclusion of these words, Robert Ranghorn seemed to search the crowd with his wildly-wondering eyes for some object, and then, to the evident dismay of the chaplain, he shrieked for Harry Frampton.

"Where are *you now?—now* is *your* time," he cried. "*I've had mine*, to your cost; and you know it. Come forward *now*, man; don't be afraid. 'Twas I, 'twas I that did it. I tell you so to your face *if* you are here. I murdered your son—your darling son. I owed it to his mother as well as yourself, and I have

kept my oath better than you have kept yours. Then come forward like a man and curse me. Ha! but he fears even to look at me. Would that he were here at my elbow now, that he might see how triumphantly I die! He's childless now! Where are the fruits of his marriage bed—that bed that ought to have been mine? Why, whelmed in the mud of a stagnant pool, to crave paternal care no more!"

During the entire time of the pinioning, as well as up to the moment of this indecent and terrible oration, the gaoler's entire attention seemed riveted on the executioner, who though every stitch of the clothing on him seemed to tremble with intense excitement rather than with any nervous fear, had performed the preliminary office of pinioning in a masterly manner, and if anything with too much severity; so much so that once or twice the culprit writhed under the too severe pressure of the cord, and asked not to be given any more pain than was necessary. The gaoler stalked about close upon the hangman and the two stalwart turnkeys who guarded the murderer on either side: and when the hangman retired to the wheel before described, to await a signal from the sheriff, the gaoler kept him in view, but did not descend the steps with him, though he kept staring at him as if he disbelieved the cause for which he came.

From the length of time the condemned man was permitted so indecently to speak as to the murder he

had committed, as well as other things to which in his address he wandered, it was deemed by the chief of the constabulary present, as well as by the reporters and others, that there must have been some connivance between the sheriff and the convict, that he was to speak against time, to give greater scope for the chance of the arrival of a reprieve. However, things came to an end at last, the murderer ceased to speak, the cap not drawn down over his eyes, and thus the expected signal, though paused for, was still not given, and the crowd again began to murmur.

The high road to the prison made a turn short to the left at some distance from it, and after the turn the front of the gaol commanded the approach. At this moment and during this awful pause, a sound in the distance, undefined at first, yet palpable, arose, and seemed to float in mid air. Slight as it was, it stilled all other noise, and forced the thousands of ears below to listen as if but one.

'Tis the loud battering feet of a horse urged at tip-top speed, the horseman rounds the corner of the high road, and comes full tilt in view of all who occupied any lofty places. The horse he rode was white, in his upheld hand he bore a wand on which was a white flag, while to render himself still more conspicuous, a bright red scarf was wound around the rider's hat, both flag and scarf streaming wildly in the wind. "A reprieve —a reprieve!" shouted a thousand throats at once, and

cheer upon cheer arose from the assembled multitude; for when a mob of this kind is gathered together, they cheer for any excitement that may offer, however adverse to the fact they had assembled to witness. On, on, came the rider, bloody with spurring, fiery red with speed, and as he neared the crowd, he transferred his flag to his bridle hand, and with the other waved above his head a large-looking letter. Right and left the cheering crowd then opened to let him pass, and he made straight for the prison-gates.

During this time, the veins on the bare sinewy neck of the culprit seemed ready to burst, not from the over tightness of the rope round them, but from the rush of blood to the head on hearing the word "Reprieve," and his broad chest heaved as if the heart would burst its natural confines. Still stood the hangman firmly at his post, in vigilance unabated, still shaking in every limb, in every shred of clothes, but still faithful to the duty he had undertaken. The horseman now had reached the prison-gate, and loudly announced the object of his mission, and in one united shout the mob roared out "Reprieve!"

"*Never!*" roared a single voice, in reply to the shouting crowd, and heard above the din. The father of the murdered boy—for it was he who held the fate of the murderer at that moment in his hand—turned the wheel, the drop fell, and tearing off all further disguise from his pallid and excited face, Harry Frampton

pointed to the corpse of the murderer, death having been instantaneous, and shouted aloud, "The oath I swore is fulfilled, *who* calls me coward *now?*"

Of course the executioner was taken into custody for having hung the man in face of an acknowledged reprieve, and without the usual signal from the sheriff, but then, and not till then, they discovered that in that act, of the wild justice of revenge, ended all self-responsibility in the voluntary executioner. Poor Harry Frampton never left the gaol alive, but died within its walls a helpless maniac.

END OF VOL. I.

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